

ST. CAMILLUS DE LELLIS



SAINT CAMILLUS DE LELLIS
Patron of the Sick and of Hospitals

St. Camillus of Lellis

*Founder of the Clerks Regular
Servants of the Sick*

Translated from the Italian

By

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Foreword

The following life of St. Camillus de Lellis, founder of the order of the Clerks Regular, Servants of the Sick, is the first English translation of the Italian original, whose author, Father Sanzio Ciccattelli, was for long years the inseparable companion of St. Camillus. Very early he began to keep a careful record of the most remarkable things he witnessed in the daily life of the founder of the order. His only purpose in doing this was to tell truthfully and as simply as possible what happened, for the spiritual instruction and edification of the other members of the order.

The first edition of the Life was published in 1615. Later on, Father Pantaleone Dolera using the acts of the Beatification and Canonization, approved by Benedict XIV, published a new edition enriched by many details taken from the official processes.

In 1851 the famous Father Frederick W. Faber of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri translated this Life into English, and this translation is now for the first time proposed to the American reader.

M. MUELLER, O.S.CAM.

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ST. CAMILLUS DE LELLIS

CHAPTER ONE

The Family, Birth, Country, and Parentage of Camillus

The family of Lellis was, according to the authors of great credit, from the time of the ancient Roman republic one of the most conspicuous of those which Totila drove away from Rome into the kingdom of Naples. From the register of that kingdom it appears to have been certainly one of the most illustrious families in the province of Abruzzo, not only for its antiquity (honorable mention of it being made as early as the time of the Emperor Frederic II), but also for its extent (branches of it existing, not only in Chieti, the Capital town, but also in Teramo, a most ancient city of the same province, and in Naples itself), as well as for the various celebrated persons whom it produced: such as, Onofrio, Baron of St. Giovanni, a great poet; Donato, Gasparo, Lelio, some of the first advocates in the royal tribunals; Carlo, known to the learned by his many publications, which show him to have been a man of varied and vast erudition; and, to omit many others, Simeone, who signalized himself in the councils of Constance and of Pisa; Theodoro, who was consistorial advocate, and legate of the Apostolic See; and Gasparo, auditor of the Roman Rota.

Then, as soldiers, the same family can with pride enumerate Lelio de Lellis, whose ancestors accommodated King Charles I of Anjou with the loan of vast sums of money, by means of which he won the kingdom of Naples from the armies of Manfredi; and Corradino, who was

sent by King Ladislaus as ambassador to Rome. His son Giovanni, in recompense for his fidelity and courage, was invested by King Charles II with the fiefs of Lascullo, Rubbiano, Pesciotto, and Scarlano, all in the province of Abruzzo. Giacomo de Lellis, who, by his bravery, of which he gave proof in many expeditions, came to be an intimate friend of King Ferdinand; and Onofrio, his son, who, like his father, held many honorable posts, and labored with the greatest intrepidity to drive out the French from the kingdom of Naples, and bring it again under the dominion of the Catholic king. This Onofrio was the father of Giovanni, whose son was Camillus of Lellis, the first Father and founder of the order of the Clerks Regular, Servants of the Sick, whose Life I am now writing. Giovanni then, treading in the footsteps of his ancestors, followed the profession of a soldier, and in the rank of captain, under the Emperor Charles V, was engaged in almost all the enterprises which were undertaken in Italy in his time. In the year 1527, the first year of his soldier's life, he served, in company with Fabrizio Marramaldo, in the imperial army, under the command of the Duke of Bourbon, at the unhappy sack of Rome, and imprisonment of Clement VII, the then Pope. Then continuing the career he had commenced, he bravely assisted Carlo Scorpione to defend and deliver the city of Naples, which was assaulted by the French, under the command of M. de Lautrec. Two years afterwards he went with Marramaldo to invest and subdue Florence. Then he went with D. Piero d' Aërba to fight in Piedmont, where the cities of Chieri, Cherasco, and Alba were taken; Pinarolo was besieged, and a battle was fought at Ceresola. Besides this, when the armament of the Turks had devastated Vieste in Capitanata, the government of the city was entrusted to him by Vin-

cenzo di Capua, Duke of Termoli, with the rank of captain, and command of five hundred soldiers. Lastly, in the misunderstandings which arose between Pope Paul IV and Philip II, king of Spain, he was employed as captain of infantry, with Ferrante di Loffredo, in the defence of Civitella del Tronto; in the taking of Ostia, and in every other event in that war. Who will not, therefore, admire the wonderful designs of the Lord God, whose wisdom and goodness, which can raise up even from the hard stones the elect children of Abraham, was pleased to bestow on a worldly soldier the gift of a son who was so dear to Him that He chose him to found a new order in that very Rome, for the ruin of which Giovanni had fought; so that the losses occasioned to it by the father were repaired with interest by the son!

Giovanni married, in Milan, Camilla Compellio of Laureto, in Abruzzo, a noble young lady, related to the principal families there. The match was made by the intervention of a brother of the lady, then majordomo of the Marquis of Vasto. Thence he went to Bocchianico, likewise in Abruzzo, his native place, and brought home with him his wife. God blessed his marriage with two sons, Giuseppe, who died a child, and Camillus, who, from being born many years afterwards, when his mother was nearly sixty years old, with gray hair and wrinkled face, procured for her from her wondering neighbors the glorious surname of St. Elizabeth. And well might they call her so, not only for her advanced age, but for the various circumstances that attended the birth of the child. It happened on the 25th of May, in the holy year 1550, on the day dedicated to St. Urban, Pope and Martyr, titular saint of the principal church, and protector of the palace. For that reason all the people were keeping holiday; there were processions with ban-

ners, and triumphal chariots, and other signs of extraordinary joy; so that it seemed to be God's intention to foreshow the joy that Camillus would bring to his country and his people, in the same way as He had done at the birth of the Baptist.

We must also relate that the mother, who had gone that day to hear Mass, and to recommend herself to God by the intercession of the saint, with her usual fervent prayers, felt on a sudden the child move within her, like another Baptist, at the presence of her Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. This brought on the pains of labor, and compelled her to return to her house. There another thing no less remarkable took place, which was that, though her pains had reached a point beyond endurance, she could find no relief, nor could she give birth to the child on the place prepared for her; but almost beside herself, she rushed impetuously to the stable, and throwing herself down on the hay, she there immediately brought forth with the greatest ease: so that we may say, that Camillus would not consent to be born in a palace, or on a bed more luxurious than that in which his Lord willed to be born. Two days afterwards he was baptized in the church of St. Michele, by Francesco Corrado the archpriest, and was held at the sacred font by Gentile, Baron of Torricella, and Simona d' Ugni, his wife.

Not to omit anything relating to the birth of Camillus, so distinguished by Providence, we must here relate that his mother, a few days before he saw the light, dreamed that she had given birth to a son with a cross on his breast, who was followed by several children all decorated in the same way. Now, as human weakness is more ready to fear evil than to hope for good, it is easy to imagine how agitated the good lady was at this dream. Those crosses seemed to her the dreary omens of some great disaster to

her house and family; and she feared that the burden she carried was to become no less than a captain of banditti, against whom men should have to arm themselves to inflict a just punishment on his crimes.

In the progress of this history it will be discovered in what a different way that dream was verified; and how her fear would have given place to consolation could she have lived to see her son with many religious followers of his holy example, and full of his fervent zeal, all armed with the venerable sign of the cross, robbing the devil of multitudes of souls, and this chiefly at the time of their agony, when he always uses all his strength to assault them with greater fury.

CHAPTER TWO

Early Years of Camillus — A Wound Comes in His Right Leg — He Makes a Vow to Become a Franciscan

Early in his boyhood, according to the custom of gentlemen, Camillus was sent to school, but he was soon carried away by the inclination which he had inherited with his blood, and by his warlike disposition; and he had scarcely learned to read and write, before he gave himself up to gambling with cards and dice, and all those amusements which the young men of the world follow with such avidity; and as he was an elegant reciter of pastoral colloquies, he took much pleasure in this vain exercise.

At the age of nineteen (in the third or fourth year of the pontificate of St. Pius V) he, with his two cousins and his father, resolved to follow the example of

his ancestors, and to employ themselves in arms. With this intention they traveled together towards Ancona, to embark there and sail to offer their services to the nobles of Venice against the Turks.

The intentions of Providence were, however, quite different, for Camillus and his father became seriously ill in that city; and judging that the new illness had not left them strength sufficient to bear the inconveniences inseparable from war, they resolved to return to Abruzzo. But they had scarcely arrived at St. Lupidio, a castle a little way from the most holy house of Loreto, when the illness of the father increased, so that he was obliged to take refuge in the house of a captain, a friend of theirs, where in a few days he died, fortified by the sacraments, and repentant for his sins, and was buried in the church of St. Francesco.

No words can express the grief of Camillus at this unexpected death, and to add to his affliction, he had lost his mother six years previously, who had gone to her rest with every sign of eternal salvation.

His grief was embittered by a fresh misfortune, which he considered the worst of all. A slight scratch which he had received on his right leg, just above his ankle, brought on a festering wound. I purposely mention this wound, because it was the principal means which Providence used to heal his soul, by giving him an acquaintance with the hospital, from which, we may say, that our congregation arose, as we shall show in the proper place.

In this condition then, after mourning over and performing the last duties to his father, he continued his journey towards home, in spite of the ravages of a slow fever, of which he felt a fresh attack every day. He was on this account obliged to rest for awhile at Fermo.

where God in His goodness caused him to see accidentally two reformed Franciscan Fathers, who were walking through the city with downcast eyes and a most devout mien. Moved by this good example, he felt sorrow for his dissolute life, and proposed to amend it; and he went so far as to make a vow to consecrate himself to God in that severe and holy order.

He was so enthusiastic in this desire, that, without any delay, he went to Aquila, to the convent of St. Bernardino, where Fra Paola Lauretano, his uncle, was guardian, a person famous for the goodness of his life, and for his extensive knoweldge; qualities that had raised him to the rank of commissary-general of the order in all the Spanish dominions. To him then Camillus told his wish, and humbly besought him to receive him among his religious. and at last declared to him his vow. But his prudent uncle, seeing him so weak in health, and being able to argue most shrewdly from the tenor of his life that his vocation was not real, refused to clothe him; and Camillus, cooled by this repulse, thought no more at that time about fulfilling his design.

CHAPTER THREE

Camillus Goes to Rome — He Serves in the Hospital of St. Giacomo — He Becomes a Soldier, and Goes through Many Dangers

Camillus stayed some time at Aquila, and then the shame of a soldier going about with a bandaged leg drove him to Rome, where he expected that he should be well taken care of, and his wound soon cured. He had scarcely arrived in the holy city, when hearing that there were skilful surgeons at the hospital of St. Giacomo, he placed

himself there as servant, and remained there many months.

He was not yet perfectly cured, when he was dismissed by Angelo Napolitano, the superintendent of the hospital, because of his violent temper, his always picking quarrels with the other servants, and his unbridled passion for gambling, making him abandon the sick, and care nothing for their sufferings. He had admonished him more than once, but not seeing any improvement in him, and at last finding a pack of cards under his pillow, he could not put up with him any longer. Being thus dismissed before his wound was wholly cured, in the year 1569, he went to serve the Venetian republic, against which Selim, the Grand Vizier of the Turks, had declared war, with the idea of conquering Cyprus. He held various offices, both naval and military, under this government, and went through many dangers, both on sea and on land. In 1571 in Corfu he was near dying of a very violent fever and dysentery, and he was cured, as he often affirmed, by the power of the sacraments; for, after confessing and communicating he immediately regained his health, in a way that he believed miraculous. Miraculous indeed may it be considered, if we bear in mind the violence of the fever and his forlorn circumstances, for he was obliged to lie in the open air in a cradle of straw, so narrow that it would hardly hold him. For this reason he was not present in the fleet of the Holy League, when, on the 7th of October, under the command of Don John of Austria, the Christian arms obtained that famous victory of Lepanto at the islands of Curzolari. He was present, nevertheless, the next year in the second expedition; but no engagement took place, and the league was broken up. Still he continued to serve under the command of Giacomo Soranzo,

who sailed with thirty galleys to take the fortress of Varbegno in Dalmatia, that had been built by the Turks to blockade the city of Cattaro.

During this voyage Camillus went through a fresh danger, for while the fleet was passing at night near Castel Nuova, a most strongly fortified place of the Turks, many shots of a culverin were fired against them, some of which were near hitting the galley in which he was. The fortress was then stormed by Soranzo from the sea, and by Prospero Colonna and Paolo Orsini from land, and was at last carried and taken, not without great loss to the faithful.

In that siege Camillus observed that many of the Italian soldiers, partly through rage and partly through hunger, cut out the livers from the bodies of the Turks whom they had slain, which they fried and devoured as great delicacies; but he, abhorring such cruelty, never consented even to taste them, content to feed on raw herbs and horse-flesh.

Another danger happened to him at Zara, where, because of a gambling quarrel, he challenged a soldier named Vangelista of Rocca di Papa; but as it pleased God, at the very beginning of the affray, the sergeant-major commanded them to proceed no farther.

The war between the Venetians and Turks was scarcely over, before Camillus, impatient of repose, sought for fresh wars in the pay of Spain, and everywhere found new dangers. Sailing in the Neapolitan galleys, when they were in the midst of the Gulf of Capri, the galley in which he was caught the wind on its beam ends and was near being upset, and unless the mast had been cut down and thrown overboard with the sail and yard-arm, the wreck would have been complete.

In 1574 he enlisted in the company of a certain Fabio, famous for its gamblings, which was his great inducement to join it. Their first expedition was to defend Tunis; then they went to Goletta, which was threatened by Sinam Bassà; and well was it for him and the rest that their assistance was refused by the officials in charge of it, through obstinacy and bravado; else, when the Turks after a few days made themselves masters of Goletta and of Tunis, Camillus would have perished in the general massacre.

During his last voyage from Palermo to Naples, such a dreadful storm arose that the vessels were obliged to run for three whole days and nights as the wind drove them, so that all the passengers gave themselves up as lost, and Camillus, no less frightened than his companions, renewed his vow of taking the habit of St. Francis. This was on the 28th of October, the day consecrated to the memory of the glorious Apostles Simon and Jude. From what has been said, one can easily see that the Lord God, in preserving Camillus with such peculiar care in his many and great dangers, destined him to perform great things for His glory and for the salvation of souls.

CHAPTER FOUR

*Camillus Having Lost Everything by Gambling, is
Reduced to Beg, and to Labor at a Building
Belonging to the Capuchin Fathers*

The galleys escaped this dreadful storm and arrived at Naples, but in such a condition that they could not be used any more; their crews were therefore discharged, and Camillus was free from military service. But he was brought so low by the privation of war, and so im-

poverished by his gaming losses at Palermo, that he had hardly clothes to his back. And yet, more obstinate than ever in his unconquerable passion, instead of amending, he staked everything he had left, his sword, his gun, his powder flask, and a cloak, forgetting that once before he had in the same city of Naples lost even his shirt, which he had been forced publicly to strip himself of in the street of St. Bartholomew, to his great shame.

Finding himself a poor man and a beggar, he determined to seek his fortune in traveling, and in company with Tiberio Sanese, a soldier like himself, he set out on the road to Puglia on his way to Manfredonia, not without some thoughts of passing into Slavonia, in the Venetian dominions, or of going into Africa, if another war should break out there. He did not remain at either of these places, for, when he got to Manfredonia, he was compelled by necessity to beg, hat in hand, before the door of the great church, in the usual way of soldiers reduced to misery. This took place precisely on the day of St. Andrew the Apostle, in the year 1574.

While he was standing in this abject way, his face burning with unspeakable shame, the Signor Antonio di Nicastro, a man of noble birth, and still more noble by his charity to the Capuchin Fathers, whom he served as procurator-general for their new buildings, happened to pass that way, and told him that if he would labor at these buildings, he should not be left without due support. Camillus answered that the consent of a companion of his was necessary: the Signor Antonio told him to go at once and speak to him, and showed him his house at a little distance from the new buildings, where he would wait to hear of his resolution.

Camillus spoke to his companion, and finding him utterly averse to the idea, without speaking a word

to his kind benefactor, he left Manfredonia, and set off towards Barletta. As he went out of the city, his vow of becoming a religious returned into his mind with a strong internal impulse of grace, and he said within himself: "Who knows whether God did not put before me this building of the Capuchins, in order that I might fulfil my promise?" Still, not wishing to desert his friend, he continued his journey, and walked twelve miles that day.

They asked as they met some carriers of the place, whether there was any employment to be had in Barletta, and receiving in answer a most decisive negative, Camillus was much disturbed, and under the influence of God's grace resolved to return to Manfredonia, and to work at the building which he had before refused. He talked to his companion about it, but he would not join him on any condition; so, overcoming all human respect, and all attachment to his friend, he at length took leave of him. On his return he felt so strongly the impulse of grace that Camillus himself declared that he ran over those twelve miles with the speed of a greyhound, so that he arrived in Manfredonia some hours before day.

He immediately sought for Signor Antonio, who took him to F. Francesco Modica, guardian of the Capuchins. The overseer of the works put under his care two asses, to carry to the buildings the requisite stone, water, and lime. Thus, like the prodigal son, God began to lead him to the true knowledge of Himself by giving him the charge of brute beasts.

I cannot find words to express how much Camillus had to endure in this low and humiliating employment and more than once he was tempted to abandon it. He would have really abandoned it on St. Lucy's day, when his dreams of resting and keeping holiday were disap-

pointed by his being called very early to his accustomed task, had not those good Fathers, who suspected that he might be led astray, stopped him by their entreaties and exhortations.

Still the enemy of man's salvation ceased not to use every means to drive him from the convent. He assailed him with two temptations, the second stronger than the first. The first arose from the return of his beloved companion, Tiberio, who began to labor at the same building, but not being able to endure the fatigue, wished to depart; and before he went, he tried every means to make Camillus go with him.

The second temptation, which was longer and more fearful, was occasioned by the ceaseless teasing of the children, who, seeing him so ill clad, with his sword-belt at his side, were rude enough to make game of him. He overcame both these temptations, for, on the one hand, he was in great want, and on the other, those holy and charitable religious did all they could to comfort him.

CHAPTER FIVE

Camillus is Called by God to a True Knowledge of Himself, and Begins to do Penance

Up to this time Camillus had no true religion in him, he had forgotten his vow and all his resolutions, and was so averse to anything in the least like a conventual life, that, although he suffered very much from the winter's cold and the scantiness of his ragged clothes, he would not at first receive any of the Capuchins' cloth, which they offered him out of compassion to make him a dress, for fear that this charity would end in clothing him completely as a friar. He afterwards accepted it, because of

the severity of the cold, and stayed at his work just long enough to gain a few crowns to enable him after the winter to return to his favorite gambling, and even to his soldier's life if he could manage it.

Such were Camillus's intentions. God in His wisdom had, however, other designs. In order to finish the conquest of a soul which He had destined for a wonderful work, He inflicted on him that wound in his leg which was never afterwards healed.

His conversion happened in this way. Camillus was sent from Manfredonia to Castello di St. Giovanni, to pack a quantity of wine that had been given to the convent as an alms. Having punctually fulfilled his commission, as he was taking his leave of the Capuchins of Castello, he was led by the Father Guardian, whose name was Fra Angelo (and an angel indeed he was to Camillus) to an arbor of vines, where he gave him a short but fervent spiritual exhortation, advising him, above all things, to fly from sin, and suggesting to him various maxims to teach him how to overcome temptations, one of which was that, whenever any gross thought came into his mind, he should immediately drive it away by spitting in the devil's face, and making no account of him.

Camillus, on taking his leave, recommended himself to the prayers of the Father Guardian, and the next morning set off on his return to Manfredonia. He rode on a packhorse, between two skins of wine done up in sacks, ruminating on the exhortations he had heard the evening before. Suddenly he felt within him a ray of heavenly light, that made him at once fully aware of his own miserable state, and awakened in him such an intense grief for his sins that his heart was crushed and broken by his excessive contrition. Being quite overcome by it, he dismounted in the middle of the

road, and kneeling down on a stone, he wept inconsolably for his ill-spent life. "Wretch that I am!" he exclaimed, with a voice choked by his sobs, "Oh, most unhappy! Why did I not know my Lord sooner? Why was I so deaf to His calls? Why have I so often offended God's goodness? How much better would it have been for me if I had never been born! Forgive, Lord, forgive this grievous sinner, and give me time to do true penance." As he said this, he struck his breast with all his strength; and his shame was so great that he did not dare to lift his eyes to heaven, thinking himself unworthy to look at it. He did not rise from his knees, nor cease weeping before returning most humble thanks to that Divine Goodness which had borne with him to that time, or before making a most firm resolution never to offend again; he then renewed his vow to enroll himself as soon as possible among the Capuchins, that in that order he might consecrate the rest of his days to a severe penance, often repeating, "No more of the world, no more of the world."

All his promises he kept faithfully, for from that day forward which was the 2d of February, the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Mary, ever virgin, in the holy year 1575, and the twenty-fifth year of his age, his conscience never more accused him of any mortal sin. Indeed, the gift of grace that he received on that happy day was so superabundant, that it left rooted in his heart a most mortal hatred for any fault, and he was accustomed to say that he would rather allow himself to be chopped in pieces than commit, not a mortal sin, but even a deliberate venial one. He had therefore good reason to celebrate the anniversary of this day with the tenderest devotion as long as he lived, and to call it the fortunate day of his conversion. Thus, Camillus, who was born in a holy year, and who, by baptism in a holy year, obtained

God as a Master and Father, after having lost Him for some time like a runaway slave, by departing from Him, regained Him in the following holy year, never more to forget Him. Purified by the intercession of the Most Holy Virgin in the baptism of his own tears, he mounted again to resume his journey to Manfredonia with such eagerness, and so resolved to put on the Capuchin habit, that if he had by chance found one in the road, he would, as he himself declared, have put it on without even waiting for the leave of the Fathers. On his arrival in Manfredonia, he threw himself down at the feet of the Father Guardian, and told him with sighs and groans what had happened to him by the way; he entreated him to give him immediately the sacred habit, and he offered himself from that time forward as a slave at the service of every one of the friars. The guardian was filled with astonishment, and saw plainly that this wonderful change was the work of the hand of the Most High; he consoled him and promised to give him the habit when Father Montefiore came. Satisfied with this promise, that same day he began to frequent the sacraments and to use most severe penances. And, instead of an extinguished firebrand, without a spark of charity, as he had been, he began to shine brightly as a burning light in the house of God, to shed continual tears for the disorders of his past life, to remember frequently the resolutions he had made, to reflect seriously on the goodness of the Lord in keeping him safe among so many dangers, and in not inflicting death upon him while he was so far from Him, to perform the most menial offices in the convent, to sweep, to wash the dishes, to dig the garden, to get up in the morning with the friars, to take the discipline with them, to fill the air with continual sighs of love, which were so many thanksgivings for God's goodness; such were from

those very first days his uninterrupted exercises. He wished, moreover, to fast the whole Lent, a mortification which he had never before used; indeed, he scarcely knew what a fast was; and when the Father Guardian exhorted him to treat his body, worn out with the labors of the day, with less severity of penance and discipline, he answered, that if they, old and infirm men, did so, how would they have a young man in robust health do less!

CHAPTER SIX

Camillus Twice Becomes a Capuchin, but is Dismissed on Account of the Wound in His Leg

Camillus persevered in this virtuous and austere mode of life, and when Father Montefiore arrived in Manfredonia, he was informed of the singular goodness of the new convert, and received him as a choir-novice, intending him to put on the habit, and to go through his year of novitiate at Trivento.

In his journey to this place, it may well be said that God's providence gave him an angel to keep him and guide him, as He had done to the young Tobias. He came late in the evening to a river, and knowing nothing about the passage and the danger, he went down into it to ford it. He had not come into the middle, before he heard a voice from the top of a mountain cry three times, "Do not do it, do not do it, do not go over." The voice frightened him, and he instantly turned back, but he could never discover from what place the voice came, nor who it was that had given him the fortunate warning; and as it was late, he was obliged to sleep that night in the woods without food or shelter. The next morning he fell in with some Capuchins who had been

summoned to Trivento to hold a chapter there, and from them he heard that the place he had attempted to cross was the most dangerous part of the river, and that if he had gone a little farther, he must have been carried away and drowned by the force of the stream, as many others had been. Many and devout were the thanks which he returned to God and his angel guardian for having delivered him from such a great and evident danger.

After his arrival at Trivento, being desirous of serving God in devout simplicity, he renounced the idea of the priesthood, and was content to profess the state of a lay brother. And now from day to day he advanced to perfection in virtue, and chiefly in obedience and humility, so that he was honored by every one with the name of "the humble brother."

But it pleased God, that after a few months his old wound should be brought on again by the incessant rubbing of the rough habit on his ankle. It was so far healed when he was received into the order that, when he showed it to Father Montefiore, he not only made light of it, but even encouraged him, by telling him that he had himself a similar complaint in his legs when he first joined the Capuchins, which was healed suddenly when he put on the habit. Quite the contrary happened to Camillus, for his wound became much worse, and the various remedies made use of failed to close it; so, to the great grief of the religious, he was dismissed in Tormajuri, by Father Giovanni Maria di Tusa, provincial of Puglia. But the tears of Camillus fell so fast, and such was the sadness and anguish with which he was evidently oppressed, that to comfort him, he promised to receive him again when he was quite cured. This promise was no small alleviation of his affliction; he humbly resigned himself to the decrees of Providence, continually strength-

ening himself in his resolution of following his dear crucified Redeemer in every state, at all times, in every adversity.

To facilitate his longed-for return to religion, he determined to return to Rome to have his wound cured there, and at the same time to enrich his soul with the holy indulgences, and to gain the jubilee in the course of the holy year, 1575. And as he had been all but perfectly cured in the hospital of St. Giacomo degli Incurabili, he hoped to receive this second time the same benefit, he therefore engaged himself there as a server. But oh, how different was his conduct from what it had been during his first stay! How changed from what he was before! He chose for his spiritual father the glorious St. Philip Neri, a person of extraordinary sanctity, and went to him every Sunday and festival to be absolved of his faults. He attended to his directions with such profit that he became the pattern of that holy place, where he remained about four years, and rose by degrees to the highest offices.

After that, seeing that his wound had been perfectly healed for six months, he determined to put off no longer his return to the Capuchins, as he desired to die in that penitential habit. He went first to take leave of St. Philip, who, enlightened by the spirit of prophecy, dissuaded him from it, telling him that he would not stay, and that his wound would return. All the reverence and confidence which bound him to that holy man could not turn him from his resolution; and I think God permitted this, in order to deliver him from his scruple about his vow, with which he was tormented. He therefore presented himself to the same Father Giovanni Maria di Tusa by whom he had been dismissed, and who was now procurator of Court. The Father, finding Camillus cured, and well remembering his promise, received him and sent him to

Civita di Penna, in the province of Abruzzo, to put on the habit, and to Tagliacozzo, to go through his novitiate. His tallness gave occasion to those religious to give him the name of Fra Christoforo, in allusion to the glorious martyr St. Christopher. He went through four months of his novitiate in perfect health, and with wonderful edification, at the end of which the Lord God, whose decrees are unchangeable, and who had destined him for greater works, caused that the same rubbing of his habit which had brought back his wound at Trivento, should again bring it back at Tagliacozzo, so that he was, to his inexpressible grief, dismissed for good from the novitiate and from the order.

CHAPTER SEVEN

*Camillus Returns to Rome, to the Hospital of St. Giacomo
There He is Made Superintendent — His New
Scruple about Becoming a Capuchin*

It was in this way made clear to Camillus that God did not wish him to live a solitary or cloistered life, he therefore proposed to give himself up entirely to the service and relief of his sick brethren. For this purpose he went to Rome, and there found that the old superintendent of the hospital of St. Giacomo had been dismissed a short time before, and it was then under the direction of Monsignor Salviati, afterwards cardinal, and of Virgilio di Crescenzo, Paolo Paravicino, and Fernando Torres, a Spaniard. As soon as they were informed of the return of Camillus, on the motion of Virgilio, who loved him tenderly, they elected him to the vacant office: and so it was fulfilled that the stone which had been

formerly rejected for its unfitness had now the honor of being chosen as the principal stone of the building.

It is impossible to describe the zeal and tenderness which he displayed in his new office. Every week he discoursed to the whole household, exhorting them to frequent the sacraments and to show an ardent charity to the sick, and he succeeded so well that every one of them lived in the fear of God. During the time that the sick were taking their meals, he caused some spiritual book to be read to them. He was the first who introduced the custom of washing their feet before they were put into bed. All the masquerades, and festivities, and races, and other sights of the carnival which are so attractive in Rome, though they excited the curiosity of all the young servers, could not for a moment draw him away from assisting his dear patients, whom he served with such love that often and often did he come to wash with his own hands their filthy and disgusting rags. That he might completely lose all taste and pleasure for the present life, he always had a skull on the table where he was eating. As he had experienced how useful the direction of St. Philip had been to him, he returned to him and chose him again for his confessor. The Saint, directly he saw him, said to him in his usual affectionate way: "God bless you, Camillus; did I not advise you to give up all thoughts of becoming a Capuchin, because your wound would come back, and you would be dismissed a second time?" Yet knowing his good intentions and his love of penance, he received him as before into the number of his spiritual children.

Who would not have thought that after such plain signs of the will of God, he would have been able to persevere quietly in his course? Yet the devil, who

would, if he could, have brought God's intentions to naught, renewed in him from time to time the old desire of fulfilling his vow, and returning to the severe life of the Capuchins. He tried therefore a third time to enter the order, and again petitioned F. Giovanni Maria di Tusa to admit him. He received, however, a plain and decided refusal. But to remove at the same time every scruple from his heart, he sent him the following document: "I, Fra Giovanni Maria di Tusa, procurator of the Court of the Capuchin Friars, certify by these presents, that Camillus of Lellis of Bocchianico is rendered ineligible to our order by an incurable complaint in one of his legs; since our constitution commands that no such person should be received into our order; and to convince us that his complaint is incurable, we have not only heard it from his own lips, but we have twice made the experiment, having twice allowed him to put on the habit, both which times he was obliged to leave the religious life. To certify this, I have written these presents, which shall be subscribed by my own hand. This 26th day of November, 1580, in our convent at Rome. Fra. Giovanni Maria *ut supra*, manu propria." But all this did not quiet Camillus, who considered within himself that his vow was not restricted to the Capuchins, but rather to the Observantines, so after a year he went to the convent of Ara Cœli to be received there. He was refused by this order for the same reason, and a similar certificate was given to him by P. Daniele Soleduna, procurator general, dated Rome, December 19, 1581. These two refusals, coupled with the two certificates, were at last able to extinguish completely in Camillus his ardent wish to become a Franciscan Friar.

CHAPTER EIGHT

*The First Thought That Camillus Had About
Instituting His Congregation*

Camillus now continued in his office of superintendent, and being free from all scruples about his vow, and perfectly tranquil, he turned all his thoughts to and employed all his care in perfecting himself in the holy virtue of charity. He used every possible means to inspire the servers with a true and a warm love for his poor sufferers. But as they were often changed, and as their services were given rather for the love of gain than from the heart, they frequently fell short of their duty. Camillus was ready to die with grief when he saw them so cool in making the sick people's beds, or in giving them their food, and so slow when they were called. But he was inconsolable when in their last moments, and in their agony, they were abandoned by the priests: as he considered that this was the greatest abuse that could disgrace Christianity. Camillus did whatever he could to remedy all these deficiencies. He deprived his eyes of sleep; he watched whole nights; he hid himself between the beds to see whether the nurses slept, and whether they came quickly when they were called; rebuking them sharply if they were negligent, and even punishing them with various penances or with dismissal from the hospital. Still he was aware that his strength was not sufficient to undo such a mass of evils, and he ceased not to recommend them to the mercy of God, whose power was alone great enough to remedy them. One evening he was standing absorbed in himself, in the middle of the hospital, meditating on the annoyances which I have mentioned, when it came into his mind that

the only remedy for them would be to found a congregation of pious men, who would not serve from the vile hope of reward, like the hired priests, but only for the love of God, and with the care of a mother for a sick child. This thought was followed by a second, which was, that the charitable office of these men, who had consecrated themselves to the relief of the sick, should be distinguished by a cross on their garments. Struck by these reflections, or rather inspirations of God, he proposed to undertake the enterprise, and to use all his talents to make it succeed, in spite of the difficulties arising from his being poor, a private man, living in the world, but without any of its wealth or influence. This inspiration came from God to our holy Father in the year 1582, the tenth of the Pontificate of Gregory XIII, about the feast of the Assumption; and it was the first germ of the whole order, though he had then no other idea than that of forming a simple congregation of secular priests, for the assistance of his hospital of St. Giacomo, and of the other hospitals in Rome.

CHAPTER NINE

First Companions of Camillus, and the First Persecution Raised by the Devil to Hinder the Establishment of the Congregation

It may be truly affirmed that from that hour Camillus never enjoyed any more repose, so intently was he occupied in his design. He fasted, he took the discipline; he wore a rough and knotted shirt of camel's hair next his skin, and round his loins a band of tin, with holes like a grater, half a palm wide; he shed tears continually, he wore himself out with burning sighs in supplication to

our Lord, that He would be pleased to complete that which He had begun in him; and I remember having heard frequently from his own lips that he had spent whole nights on his knees to rear this tender plant, and that he had watered it with torrents of tears.

Yet as he wished to co-operate on his part, he immediately applied himself to secure the assistance of able fellow-laborers, and communicated his idea to some persons of the same hospital, in whom he had confidence, and whose goodness was well known. He chose five of them to begin with: Bernardino Norcino, of Matrice; Curzio Lodi Aquila; Francesco Profeta, a priest of Randazza; Ludovico Altobelli; and a person named Benigno. As they were all men of great virtue they willingly consented, protesting that they would follow him in life and in death, in prosperity and in adversity. Being thus resolved, they turned one of the rooms of the hospital into an oratory; they erected an altar in it, and placed upon it a crucifix carved in relief; there they assembled every day and recited the litanies, took the discipline, and spoke together only of spiritual and heavenly things. When they came forth from it, they were like so many seraphims burning with love, and any one may imagine with what fervor and affection they went to serve the sick.

They had continued these holy exercises a few days without changing their habit, but keeping their secular dress, when the devil, foreseeing what great fruit might arise from such a society, and wishing to root it up in its infancy, put into the heart of a bad man connected with the hospital, who was offended that he had not been asked to join the other five, to go to the guardians and make various false charges against them, and insinuate that they intended, in the course of time, to make themselves masters of the hospital. The guardians' suspicions were

aroused; and not wishing to be wanting in their duty, they immediately summoned Camillus, who was the inventor of this novelty, and forbade him to form any society whatever, and commanded him to strip his oratory immediately. Camillus was grieved above measure at hearing himself rebuked for a thing which he never thought to be blamed about, and was near giving up his office, to seek for a place where he might exercise his charity without hindrance. But afterward considering that the persecution stirred up against him was a temptation of the devil, who was sowing those tares, to choke the little good seed which he had begun to cultivate, he resolved to stay, and resigned himself entirely to the will of Providence.

This resolution, which he strictly kept, was most fortunate, for a new trial was at hand. As he was rather slow in stripping the oratory, some of the other servers were commanded to do it; and they, with the most unseemly haste, dismantled the altar, took away the crucifix, and laid it on the ground behind the door. Camillus a little while after returned into the room, and seeing everything turned upside down and his beloved crucifix in so unworthy a place, was pierced to the heart with grief and fell down at the feet of Jesus and fervently recommended to Him his designs; then he took it in his arms and gave it a more fitting resting-place in his own room. At that time the guardians of the hospital were Monsignor Cusano, afterwards elected Cardinal, and Signori Alessandro de Grandis, Ciantres di Lione, and Tarquinio Lipari.

CHAPTER TEN

*Camillus is Comforted by Our Lord in a Dream,
and Confirmed in the Holy Design of
Instituting the Congregation*

The night came on, and Camillus retired into his chamber full of grief on account of the prohibition that had been laid upon him and fell down on his knees before the holy image and spent many hours, partly in prayer, partly in pondering over this unexpected and vexatious event; at last, for very weariness, he fell asleep. And in his sleep he saw the crucifix which he had brought into his room the evening before move its head and encourage him to persevere in his undertaking, saying to him: "Fear not, O coward; go on, I will help thee, and I will be with thee." With these words the vision disappeared, and Camillus arose quite another man, filled with joy and with a firm resolution not to abandon the work that he had commenced. He immediately returned humble thanks to that most merciful Lord who had deigned in His goodness to show him so great a favor, and waited with impatience for day, to call his companions to partake in his joy, for they were yet novices in the school of Christ and were downcast and fearful.

He related to them his dream; he told them the promise of our Lord, which so assured their hearts, that they resolved to make head against the enemy and to continue their accustomed exercises, not now in a private oratory, nor in public, but secretly in the church, the keys of which were kept by Francesco Profeta, the chaplain. Here, then while all the others were sleeping, or were walking about Rome, did they shut them-

selves up together, to pray, to take the discipline, to talk of God, or to hear some spiritual reading, to strengthen them in their desire of enduring willingly every kind of labor for Jesus Christ.

And in order to assure Camillus that the apparition was a real one, our Lord deigned to renew it when he was up and awake. Our Saint has often declared that, in his deep distress at the difficulties which beset him in the beginning of his work, he had recourse to the holy crucifix; and while he was praying with groans and tears, he saw plainly the hands separated from the cross, and he heard these words repeated: "Why art thou troubled, O coward? Persevere in thy work, for I will help thee, for this is My work, and not thine."

The repetition of this favor increased the constancy of Camillus and redoubled his devotion to that blessed image, which thenceforth he always carried with him wherever he went; and when he had obtained possession of the house of the Maddalena, he placed it above the architrave of the church, and whenever he went there, he first adored the Most Holy Sacrament, and then never failed to look most devoutly at his crucifix and to salute from his heart those dear wounds, in which, as he used to say, he had always found grace and mercy. At present this image stands in the chapel, on the right as you enter the little door of the church.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Camillus Resolves to Found His Congregation Independently of the Hospital, to Undertake the Service of Men Sick of Pestilential Diseases, and to be Ordained Priest

In the meantime Camillus reflected that nothing very useful could come from his secret assemblies with his few faithful companions, and that it was not preparing the way for the fulfilment of his design. This consideration filled him with anxiety, but he was relieved by the kindness of our Lord, who used another of His servants to inform him of His will.

Camillus had a friend named Marc' Antonio Corteselli, a penitent of St. Philip, who was in the habit of going to the hospital to attend upon the sick. To him, then, he discovered his intention of founding a congregation for the relief of the sick poor; and he gave him a circumstantial account of all that had taken place, and then begged for his advice. The answer of Corteselli was exactly such as you might have expected a wise and good man to make. He thought that such a congregation was most expedient for the sick, and would by God's blessing succeed, but not within the walls of the hospital, where, even if it did succeed, it would not be of much utility. For what good was to be expected if it was founded in an establishment belonging to other persons? Was it not the same as founding it in the air, without any true foundation? He advised him, therefore, to depart from the hospital and to hire a house in the city, and there to begin as he wished.

Camillus readily received this advice, as though it had come from heaven, and determined to put it into execution. He was greatly confirmed in this design by Corteselli's returning to the hospital the following Sunday and telling him that he had spoken at length with Father Francesco Maria Tarugi, of the Oratory, afterwards cardinal, and that the design had greatly pleased him; and that he had added, that if the congregation were founded, it would be very useful in time of pestilence. This opinion was heard by Camillus with great satisfaction, and from that time he resolved in his heart to embrace also the care of persons afflicted with pestilential diseases.

But as God, who had marked out His servant for the accomplishment of great things, kept gradually enlightening him step by step, after this answer of Corteselli, he was led on to a much more important consideration. The decision of founding the congregation outside the hospital was excellent. But where was he, a simple layman, to find persons willing to follow him? He wished, therefore, to be ordained priest and then to leave the hospital; to open a house in the city, and at last to form his congregation, not of seculars, but of religious persons, when the clerical habit would command respect.

Having come to this conclusion, he trusted that he would be able to overcome every difficulty by the aid of the same Lord who had before comforted him, and applied himself to learning the first rudiments of grammar, under the tuition of a chaplain of St. Giacomo, called D. Antonio Biscaino. He did not profit much by this man, who soon died. But the loss was more than made up to him, as Providence put into his place another priest of Biscaglia, more capable than the former one. From the care which he took in instructing his new scholar, one might almost fancy that God had revealed to him that

this illiterate person was destined to do great things in His Church. He was always at his side, always spurring him on, and forcing him to make haste with his lesson. Camillus corresponded so faithfully to the zeal of his master that in his walks through the hospital he had always the book in his hand.

Yet, for all this, he thought all his diligence, however exact, but too slow, and therefore, in his desire to be more quick, he did not hesitate to attend for some time the schools of the Jesuits in the Roman college, and to begin at the lowest class, however humiliating it might be to a man thirty-two years old. It was wonderful to behold his humility and his patience in bearing the shame of standing, old and tall as he was, in the midst of boys, who often mocked him with the words, "tarde venisti," "You have come late." Camillus suffered and was silent; but once his master, supernaturally illumined, as we may well believe, answered for him: "It cannot be denied that this man has come late to school, but he will soon hasten on, and will do one day great things in the Church of God." So much, in fact, did he labor, and so quick!y did he learn, that those Fathers who loved him greatly, and knew that he was superintendent of the hospital of St. Giacomo, judged him fit to be promoted to the priesthood.

CHAPTER TWELVE

*Camillus, after Overcoming Two Great Difficulties
by God's Assistance, is Ordained Priest*

Camillus finding himself able to be ordained, and having passed the examination of F. Stefano Pace, Apostolic Examiner of the Roman Clergy, wished to re-

ceive orders immediately: but here again he encountered two very great difficulties. The first was this. He went one Sunday morning with F. Francesco Profeta to St. John Lateran, to receive there the first tonsure; and in having his dimissory letters examined by the secretary, Giacomo Buzio, it was found that some necessary clauses were wanting, an error that was caused by the inexperience of the person who had obtained and sent them; so that he was forced to return home grieving at the delay which this occasioned: for it would take many days either to go himself or to send others for new dimissory letters. Yet his grief soon ceased; for he had scarcely come to the amphitheater, commonly called the Colosseum, when the Lord God, the consoler of the afflicted, infused into his heart such a lively hope of soon escaping from this difficulty that he turned to F. Francesco Profeta, and said to him: "I am no longer sad, for the Lord has done me the favor to assure me that to-day shall not pass without my being freed from all anxiety."

So did it exactly come to pass, for he had scarcely reached St. Giacomo, and had just knelt down before the crucifix in the middle of the hospital to salute it (as was his custom whenever he went out or in) with a Pater and an Ave, when a certain man of Chieti, a friend of his father and of his family, presented himself. This man had come to Rome a short time before on a business trip; and as he was amusing himself on that day in examining the antiquities of Rome, he went in by chance, or rather by God's guidance, to visit the hospital. Camillus thought he knew him, and approaching each other in great amazement, they embraced and gave vent to their joy at seeing each other again after so long a time. Passing from one topic to another, Camillus at last took an opportunity of telling him about the

difficulties in his testimonials, and was told in reply, that not only could he give every necessary attestation, but that he could procure a like one from a priest, a fellow-townsmen of his, who was also in Rome. Unspeakable was the joy of Camillus at this happy accident; they went to find the priest, and then all three presented themselves to the secretary, Giacomo Buzio, and supplied that very evening the defect in the letters dimissory.

He soon afterwards received the first tonsure on the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, a notable day for him: and between the following Sunday and the feast of St. Matthias the Apostle, he received the minor orders, which were conferred upon him in the sacristy of St. Silvestro a Monte Cavallo, by Monsignor Goldwell. Bishop of St. Asaph's, an Englishman, Suffragan of Cardinal Savelli, at that time Vicar of Pope Gregory XIII. It only remained for him to be promoted to holy orders: and here arose the second and greater difficulty.

Camillus had neither title nor a benefice, nor a patrimony. For although Giovanni, his father, had acquired a good deal of property in his military expeditions, yet, like almost all the soldiers who were engaged in the sack of the holy city of Rome, he found himself by the just judgment of God so poor at his death that he had nothing to leave to his son but his sword and his dagger. He spent several months in various trials without success, and when he had no other place to turn to, God came in to provide for him and to make up for his useless labors.

One evening in the month of December, 1583, he was standing in the court-yard of St. Giacomo, and there he met with Fermo Calvi, a Roman gentleman of no common goodness, only known to Camillus as being the brother of his friend Antonio Calvi. He approached him

and began to tell him his idea of founding a congregation for the assistance of the sick; of his desire to be ordained priest in order to accomplish this; and of the obstacles which his want of a patrimony presented. Fermo understood quite well the meaning of Camillus, and in taking leave of him, encouraged him to put his trust in God, whose goodness never fails in the necessities of His servants. But no sooner had he reached his home, than he considered more seriously all that had been said, and saw the vast use which would result from a congregation such as Camillus had described, and felt himself inspired to provide him with the necessary patrimony. So the next day he returned to the hospital and promised to Camillus (who little expected such liberality) to give him five hundred scudi, the annual interest of which would be thirty scudi. The good Father was surprised at this offer and could not find words to thank the Lord for having made use of this good man to console him. His confusion and his joy were afterwards increased, when, after he had gone to tell the notary Giacomo Buzio what had been promised him, and had been informed by him that this was not enough, but that he must get as much as would secure an annual income of thirty-six scudi, he returned to Signor Fermo, who that very day made over to him an annuity of thirty-six scudi for his life, as may be seen in the acts of Vangelista Cicarelli, for January 16, 1584.

The two difficulties were overcome, and he was ordained by Msgr. Goldwell (with dispensation for the shortness of interval) subdeacon in the ember week in Lent; deacon on the Saturday "Sitientes," and priest at Pentecost. He said his first Mass on June 10, in the same year, at the altar of the Madonna, in the little church of St. Giacomo degli Incurabili, to the great consolation of his companions, of Signor Fermo Calvi his benefactor,

and other devout persons, many of whom, and among them Fermo, had the satisfaction of receiving the Lord's body from his hands. Signor Fermo afterwards sent him as a present a chalice, a missal, three chasubles of different colors, and all the furniture necessary for the celebration of Mass.

Camillus in gratitude for this liberality, after he had founded the house of the Maddalena, invited him to live there and assigned to him three rooms, gave him a paid servant, and while he lived he took care of him and provided him with everything with the greatest attention. Signor Fermo on his part frequently gave Camillus large sums, and enriched our church with many pieces of plate, worth more than 2500 scudi; namely, four pairs of candlesticks, a cross, a censer, a chalice and paten, and a magnificent monstrance for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, to which he had a particular devotion; and at last on his death-bed he made our order his heir. This man, worthy of everlasting remembrance, passed to a better life in the year 1612, aged eighty-four years, and was buried in the same church that he had so liberally adorned.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Camillus Leaves the Hospital and Begins His Congregation in the Church of the Madonnina

The gentlemen of the hospital were much pleased at the new honor their superintendent had received in the priesthood, and to give him some recompense for his many and long labors, they elected him chaplain of a little church of theirs near the Porta del Popolo, called the Madonnina de' Miracoli. Camillus thought that he could here at once begin his congregation, nothing more being requisite

than to leave the hospital and relinquish his office. Yet here again fresh difficulties arose, not so much on his own account, as because he took away with him Bernardino, whom every one for his great goodness esteemed the firmest support of that holy place, and who was especially beloved by Msgr. Cusano, the chief of the governors, so that his loss would probably be highly resented by them. Yet putting confidence in God, for love of whom both he and his companions had engaged in the former unfortunate undertaking, they agreed that they must break entirely with the world and act like men truly great.

They determined to do as follows: Camillus and Curzio were first to ask leave to go home, to put some affairs of theirs in order, and on their return were not to go to the hospital, but to go straight to the church of the Madonnina. Bernardino, as soon as he should hear of their arrival, was to join them immediately; and F. Francesco Profeta was to do the same, as soon as he should be free from certain suits in which he was involved. Ludovico Altobelli and Benigno were no longer in their company, as the former had gone to be prior of the hospital of St. Giovanni, and the other had, for just reasons, left that of St. Giacomo.

Having agreed upon this plan, Camillus and Curzio asked leave of absence of the guardians, which was granted very unwillingly, in spite of the hope of seeing them again on their return. Camillus took this opportunity of dexterously slipping out of his office of superintendent, and prayed the guardians to find a successor for him, as he could not possibly tell how long he should be obliged to be away. After their journey and sojourn in Abruzzo was over and they had returned to Rome, they went, as they had agreed, straight to the church of the Madonnina, where Bernardino immediately

joined them; and great was the pleasure that this long-looked-for meeting gave all three of them. It took place in the beginning of September, in the year 1584, the last of the Pontificate of Gregory XIII.

It may be said with reason that this was the time when Camillus permanently founded his congregation: and in proof of this it was very soon afterwards, namely, on the octave of the Nativity of our Lady, that Camillus, Bernardino and Curzi lay aside their secular dress and put on cassock and ferraiuolo. The congregation having thus been born, as it were, with the most holy Virgin, the three fervent laborers began to attend the hospital of St. Spirito every day, where they served the sick with the most fervent charity, according to some short rules that Camillus had written down. They gave them their food, they made their beds, they cleansed their tongues, they exhorted them to patience and the devout receiving of the sacraments, they suggested pious ejaculations, they recommended their souls, and, in fine, they performed acts of charity so intense, that it would be absurd to expect anything of the kind from even the most active of ordinary servants. Whoever saw them acting with such tenderness, easily perceived that persons of that stamp did not look at the sick simply as men, but by a living faith and ardent charity served them as though they saw in them the very person of Jesus Christ, wounded and fainting; so that they occasioned great wonder and edification.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

*God, in Order to Perfect the Perseverance of Camillus,
Proves Him with Various Tribulations*

In this new abode and new mode of life Camillus did not forget that beloved crucifix which had twice so seasonably consoled him in his great afflictions, so he went to the hospital of St. Giacomo, to the room which used to be his; and although the image was large in itself, besides the mount which supported the cross, he took it affectionately in his arms and carried it to the Madonnina in the middle of the day, with bare head, through the public street of the Ripetta. So great was the piety which Camillus showed in this devout action that all the people in the streets knelt down, struck their breast, and recommended themselves to that holy sign of our redemption. Those who were in the houses ran to the windows and called one another to make haste to come to see F. Camillus carrying his crucifix to the Madonnina. One of those who were called to this edifying sight was Signor Fermo Calvi, who was quite affected by the modesty and humility of Camillus.

He was all the time most devoutly imploring the mighty assistance of his adorable crucifix; still not many days passed before three most grievous tribulations arose to assail him. The first was, that Monsignor Cusano, seeing that Camillus had changed his mode of life and had taken with him his crucifix, concluded that he had left the hospital of St. Giacomo for good, and thereupon thought himself deceived, and was very angry; so that when he met him one day in the court-yard of the hospital, supposing that it was entirely through him that his

companions had been enticed away, he gave him in public a very sharp rebuke and threatened to punish him if he did not leave off enticing the servers away from the hospital. And then, as if this was not enough, he went to St. Philip Neri, the confessor of Camillus, and complained bitterly to him that he had not only left the hospital himself, but had also taken away the best of the officers, and this because he had taken into his head to found a nonsensical congregation, as he used to call it. St. Philip, who had been much pleased up to that time with everything that Camillus did in the hospital, when he heard that he had left it without ever speaking a word to him, and contrary to the wishes of the governors, tried all means to make him resume the office of superintendent; but finding him inflexible, and knowing how much he loved him and desired to continue under his spiritual direction, he thought he should be able to make him follow his advice by refusing to hear his confessions any longer, so he made him go to Father Antonio Talpa. This was his second tribulation, and great was the pain it gave him; nevertheless, he obeyed the wishes of the saint, only he begged him with all submission and humility not to wonder at what he had done, because he felt himself impelled by an inward power to do something more than attend only to himself.

When this storm had passed, it pleased our Lord to try His servants more severely, and to confirm them in holy perseverance by a third tribulation; and this was a very dangerous illness which attacked Camillus and Curzio both at the same time. It was occasioned by their excessive fatigues, their bad eating, and worse sleeping, having for beds only three mats, and for covering two quilts that Fermo Calvi had bought for them; and the chamber where they slept being in a place subject to the

malaria, on the banks of the Tiber, from which an unwholesome fog usually arises. All these adversities could not move the heart of Camillus, who stood like a rock in the midst of the waves and bore his heavy calamity with unconquerable patience, and at the same time confirmed the good Curzio in the same virtue, telling him, that our Lord had favored them with the present visitations, that they might be taught by their own infirmities, and made masters in the school of suffering, and might come forth more zealous in feeling for, and assisting, their sick brethren.

But as their illness kept getting worse, and since in the Madonnina they had no kind of convenience, Camillus was obliged to return to the hospital of St. Giacomo, where he was received by the governors and placed in the same room where he lived when he was superintendent, in hopes that he might resume his office; and Curzio, to the hospital of St. Giovanni, where the prior, Altobelli, formerly his companion, received him in his own room and treated him with real brotherly charity. And both had the happiness to be visited in turn by Bernardino, with the most ardent affection, who, old as he was, remained strong and well. It pleased God that they should at last recover, and weak as they were, they immediately returned to their church and their exercises, going every morning and evening to the hospital of St. Spirito, in spite of rain or wind or any other hindrance, and treating themselves so hardly in their food that, on their return from the hospital, they either prepared a little toast and water for their whole meal, or, for the sake of not losing time in lighting the fire, feasted on bread and dried currants.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

*Camillus Leaves the Church of the Madonnina — He
Receives Candidates — God's Providence in
Maintaining Him*

Camillus, finding the neighborhood of the Tiber so unhealthful, proposed leaving the church of the Madonnina, and looking out for a lodging in some place where the air was better. He saw a suitable house in the Via delle Botteghe oscure, but the difficulty was, that the rent was fifty scudi a year, and a half-year was to be paid in advance. As he had no money, trusting in God's providence, he discovered his intention and his need to an acquaintance of his, Pompeo Baratelli, a Lombard. This man, full of reverence and wonder at the courage which could attempt a work so difficult as the foundation of a new congregation in the city of Rome, where there were already so many, and at a time when, in consequence of the decrees of the holy council of Trent, such matters were treated with great reserve, promised to pay the rent, and to encourage him the more, he took out thirty scudi upon the spot and liberally presented them to him. As soon as Camillus had found this treasure, he rented the house and went to live there with Curzio and Bernardino in the year 1585. The new owners were only three; for though a young man, named Palamede, had joined them in their other house, yet when he found that they were almost sinking under fatigue and want, he soon left them.

At their new house they continued to attend the hospitals, and the fame of their virtue soon spread through Rome, and many, both priests and laymen, begged to be admitted to their company. But as the institute was

laborious, and repugnant to all man's natural inclinations, some delayed, some abandoned the undertaking, and there remained only a few robust in body and inspired with true courage, enemies of themselves and willing to die in any place, however infected and filthy, for the love of God. These were men of every nation, citizens and strangers, learned and unlearned; as Camillus did not make a very careful selection, but left the institution to grow by itself, to see whether the experiment would succeed. Indeed it would have been of no use in the beginning of the congregation, to have had men of less courage and constancy in braving death and overcoming all the obstacles which they met with in attending the hospitals. Signor Pompeo supported them abundantly with his alms; and such was his affection for those servants of our Lord that he was not content with paying the rent of their house and with giving orders to a baker to provide them every day with as much bread as they required, but he often went to see them himself and gave them, sometimes twenty, sometimes thirty, scudi as an extraordinary gift. Indeed it appeared as if our Lord called into being this generous benefactor for the very purpose of sustaining the congregations in its arduous beginnings. And the perfection of his charity increased so greatly that he more than once assured Bernardino that, if he had not wherewith to support them, he would go out into service or cut wood in the forests to share his earnings with them. When Pompeo left Rome, Providence, which had taken this needy family under its protection, soon found it a new support.

A certain Maurizio, Mazziere del Papa, a friend of Bernardino, fell sick, and begged Camillus to allow him to be taken into our house to be nursed; and there seeing the great charity with which he was assisted and served, he gave four pieces of land in the mountains which were sold

by Camillus for about five hundred scudi. His illness afterwards proving fatal, he left all his property to the congregation; which was of no small assistance in its beginning, and he distinguished the tender love that he felt for Bernardino by leaving him his own silver walking-stick, the value of which was, however, put into the common purse. Thus the same God who clothes the lilies of the field and feeds the birds of the air provided for these poor servants of His, who slept on mats and fed most insufficiently, greater convenience and better food. Camillus thus obtained means of maintaining his congregation till it was confirmed by the Apostolic See, and so might send through Rome to obtain the necessary alms from the faithful.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Camillus Embraces the Spiritual Care of Sick People out of the Hospitals

It cannot be doubted that the first intention of Camillus in founding the congregation was confined simply to giving assistance to the hospital of St. Giacomo and the other hospitals of Rome; but as time went on, he came to understand that God, who often brings great things out of small beginnings, contemplated a far larger field. At first, therefore, He gave him only sufficient light to assist him in carrying out his narrow views, and afterwards He went on gradually enlightening him just so far as the designs of His holy will required. God's design was to form a congregation by means of which a remedy might be provided for numerous wants of the faithful, without changing the first idea of assisting the sick, but extending it to that comprehensiveness at which it was to arrive. To

see the truth of this remark, we must, on the one hand, fix our attention on that which Camillus intended; and on the other hand, we must consider how much greater things God produced from this first thought.

Camillus's first intention (which was, as it were, the trunk of the whole tree) was to found a congregation, and inclose it within the walls of the hospital of St. Giacomo. But God, who did not wish it to be shut up in such narrow limits, nor planted on another man's ground, caused so many difficulties to arise, that he was obliged to transplant it to the church of the Madonnina, that it might have room to extend its branches, first into all the hospitals of Rome, and then into the hospitals of all the world. Camillus intended to employ merely a few lay servers; but God, whose object was much more vast, and who knew how inconvenient it was to entrust the government of souls to simple and uneducated men, so disposed that the congregation was soon made up of priests, and that Camillus, as the first step, should ascend to that dignity. Camillus intended to leave it free and unfettered by vows; but God, who wished to make it permanent, soon inspired His vicars, the popes, to erect it into a religious community, bound like all others by solemn vows.

Again, Camillus had never thought of undertaking the care of persons afflicted with pestilence, nor of prisoners. But God, whose pleasure it was that no kind of infirmity be deprived of this powerful assistance, so disposed that the care of both these kinds of persons should be embraced by the congregation. Lastly, Camillus had never thought of assisting the dying in private houses; but God, who saw the numbers and numbers of souls whom the devil won by waiting to make his final attack upon them in that terrible moment, not only inspired him, but we may even say, forced him, to undertake this office, as most important

of all, for the Catholic world. So that as His infinite wisdom had armed His Church with various orders, all incessantly occupied for the salvation of His children in the time of their life and health; in these last times of the world's old age, when charity seemed not so much cooled as utterly extinguished, He deigned to provide a new order, whose principal object was to strengthen men in their painful agony. This last and necessary office of charity was reserved for Camillus and his congregation; and they were induced to undertake it in the following manner: Among the devout exercises which Camillus and his companions practiced in the hospital of St. Spirito, was this, to take care that persons died well, by whispering sweet and holy suggestions to them in their agony, according to the counsel of Ecclesiasticus: "Console him in the moment of his death."

This mark of charity was so acceptable to all Rome that all classes were emulous in their endeavors to secure the assistance of the congregation for the persons who might be dying in their houses, both nobles and plebeians, prelates, and gentlemen of every condition, but particularly strangers at inns, who thought it dangerous to trust their eternal salvation in their extremity to women, to servants, and to their friends, since experience shows us that this class of persons give most of their thoughts to rifling the dying man's property, thinking little or nothing of the salvation of his soul. So many and so repeated were their requests that Camillus considered the voice of the people to be the voice of God, and had not the heart to refuse them; having obtained the consent of his companions, he ordered that this should be added to the other exercises of the congregation, namely, that whenever they were summoned, whether by day or night, the religious should go to assist the dying in all

parts of the city, as may be read in the bulls of the popes.

This new work of charity has been found so useful for the salvation of souls that it would have been a good thing, if, from the very beginning of the Church, there had been established an order more numerous than any other, and more abundant in learned men, or at any rate, not inferior to any other, for this one object. This last function was embraced by Camillus within the last few months of the pontificate of Gregory XIII, who went to a better life on the 10th of April, 1585, and was succeeded by Sixtus V, who was elected on the 24th of the same month. In the meantime Camillus saw the number of his laborers daily increasing, and many more wishing to know what name they were to give to his congregation; so he advised with his companions, and taking occasion from their ardent love to the sick, whom they served as their lords and masters, he came to the determination to call them "Servants of the Sick;" his society having had up to that time the name of the Congregation of Father Camillus.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Bernardino, the First Companion of Camillus, Passes to a Better Life

A few months after this name was given to the congregation, Camillus lost his first and beloved companion, Bernardino. And as he was a man of singular goodness, and venerated as a saint by all who knew him, I cannot omit this opportunity of giving some account of his many virtues, on the authority of Curzio and Camillus himself. Bernardino had filled the office of keeper of stores at the hospital of St. Giacomo for many years before he joined

the congregation. But in his youth he had been a wood-seller in the Ripetta. Any one can imagine what privations he endured in an occupation so laborious, yet he never omitted his mental prayer, in which, together with his other prayers, he was engaged from the evening Ave till midnight. Then, when the bell of Ara Cœli rang for matins, he went to rest, and remained till he heard the morning Ave from St. Rocco, the sound of which recalled him to his accustomed toil.

More than once it happened to him that, being wearied out by his labor of the day, he went to sleep on his knees and remained so all night, awaking in the morning with his rosary in his hand, stiff with cold. His fervor was not content with this life of toil, but he also fasted and took the discipline to bring his body under subjection to his will. He was most tender in his devotion to the Blessed Virgin; he never lost sight of the presence of God, and when he spoke of the things of God, the words fell upon his lips with such affection and sweetness that all who heard him were moved, especially as he always held his hand on his breast, as if to repress the sacred fire that burned within.

His patience in bearing injuries was heroic. Maurizio, Mazziere del Papa, mentioned above, used to relate that, as he was one day carrying wood in the Ripetta, he accidentally ran his barrow against a certain courtier. This man was enraged, and forgetting the dignity and calmness of a gentleman, gave him before many persons a sound box on the ear. Bernardino at this outrageous affront left his barrow and ran after the offender, as if he wished to revenge himself. But, while the spectators expected to see them fight, he had no sooner come up to him, than, like a lamb, he knelt down at his feet and said to him: "As you have given me one blow for your pleasure, I beseech

you to give me another for mine," offering to him at the same time his other cheek, in obedience to the command of Jesus Christ. The courtier was humbled by this action and went away ashamed; Bernardino, on the other hand, returned to his barrow joyful and happy.

He had been a frequenter of the sacraments for forty years, and had been allowed more than once to see Jesus under the form of a child in the consecrated host; this was often told to Father Camillus, by Father Ottaviano Capelli, of the Company of Jesus, who heard his confessions. But although he was so pure and innocent, and, moreover, favored with these sublime visions, he was not, for all that, free from even grievous temptations. He was troubled more than one can imagine by a temptation about the mystery of the Trinity, which arose from his not being able to comprehend, with his weak intellect, how the intelligence of the Father could by a real generation produce the consubstantial and co-eternal Son. What penances did he go through on this account! How many times did he go the round of the Seven Churches, to obtain from our Lord the grace of being delivered from it! The God of Mercy at last heard him, appearing to him in his sleep in the form of a most beautiful old man all white, from whose mouth came forth a most beautiful child, much more lovely than any angel. From that time during his whole life he was nevermore troubled in this matter.

His disposition was so jovial and merry that the sick were consoled by the mere sight of him, and cast off all sadness; and he never cooled in his care for them, nor suffered his first fervor to grow lukewarm. In speaking he had such suavity and grace that he easily obtained whatever he asked. Even while he was a layman, he often on feast days collected together the porters and common

people of the Ripetta, and mounted on a step in the middle of the piazza, to teach them the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria. He was not without supernatural illuminations; for when he was a youth, as he was meditating on leaving his country and going to Rome, he was kept back for want of money, when he thought he heard a voice encouraging him and saying: "Depart from this land, and go thy way; thou shalt find a scudo in the road;" and he had not gone thirty paces before he found a scudo and was enabled to gratify his wishes.

While the congregation had still its abode in the Via della Botteghe oscure, he never passed by the church of the Maddalena, without saying to his companion, "Brother, this church will be ours one day." And yet Camillus had never thought once of obtaining that church. Still he was so open and so sure of this presentiment of his that one day when he was passing the church and found it shut, he said to his companion, "Brother, let us kneel down here in the middle of the street and recite a Pater and an Ave to this glorious saint, for the spirit tells me that this church will be ours." And so it was, as shall be told in its place.

Father Marcello Pallavicino, of the Company of Jesus, an intimate friend of Camillus and Bernardino, declared, that when Father Ridolfo Acquaviva had asked permission of his Father General to go to the East Indies, and had almost lost hope of obtaining it, he recommended himself to the prayer of Bernardino, who told him that he need not doubt, for he would obtain the permission. Exactly as it turned out, for in a short time he was sent there, and had the happiness of honoring our holy faith by suffering martyrdom in the isles of Salsetta.

Lastly, we must add for the glory of this great servant of our Lord, that he was partner in all the labors and suf-

ferings which Camillus endured, and the wonderful works he performed in establishing his congregation. He always ardently desired to see it approved by the Holy See, but this was not granted to him, for at about the age of sixty years he departed to the Lord in the arms of Camillus, who could not but mourn most bitterly over the loss of this faithful and unwearied friend. Our founders had not at that time a church of their own, so their confessor, Father Ottaviano Capelli, allowed him to be buried with the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, in the chapel of the angels in the church of the Gesu. Bernardino was the first brother who entered the congregation, and the first who died. Our holy Father thought, and said so whenever he spoke of him, that his soul went straight to heaven, without any taste of the pains of purgatory.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Pope Sixtus V Confirms the Congregation by an Apostolic Brief

The number of those who were attracted by the odor of this new plant, and crowded to rest under its shadow, increased so wonderfully every day that Camillus thought it neither reasonable nor expedient that such a multitude should live together in community without the sanction and benediction of the Supreme Pontiff. The means by which he was to obtain this caused him much anxiety and doubt; and as he was not on such terms with any one of the cardinals that he could ask him to be his mediator, he had recourse to his usual means, namely, prayer, and with fervent humility begged of our Lord God to give another proof of His love, by deigning to point out to him the easiest and safest way to obtain what he wished.

The consoler of the humble delayed not to hear him, for as he was passing one day through the palace of the Duke Muti, where Card. Mondovi then lived, he saw him coming downstairs to accompany another cardinal to the gate, according to the custom of the Sacred College. In this most fortunate meeting he observed in the face of the cardinal, old as he was, an extraordinary joyfulness and light-heartedness, so that he appeared an excellent man for his purpose. And although he had never before seen him or known him, yet relying on God, he presented himself to him and informed him briefly of what he wanted and of the plan of his institute, and then begged him to take under his patronage their feeble commencement and to get the Pope to confirm it. The cardinal was much pleased with the simplicity and candor of Camillus, and asked him if there was any one in Rome who knew him and to whom he could refer. Camillus promptly answered yes, and mentioned some Roman gentlemen, among others, Virgilio Crescenzio and Patrizio Patrizi. The cardinal answered that it was sufficient if these two would speak to him about it and that then he might count upon his assistance. The two gentlemen did so and informed him fully, not only of the work which Camillus was attempting, but also of his wonderful charity and his great virtues. The cardinal was surprised that a private and uneducated man should be so high-minded as to conceive and undertake a work so profitable and necessary to his sick neighbors, and was disposed to regard him with special good will and to use all his influence with the Pope on his behalf.

Pope Sixtus had already heard with pleasure the good report of him, which was spread abroad through Rome, and hoped that his undertaking would be of great service in aftertimes; so he committed the affair to

the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. Here in the presence of Cardinal Mondovi it was fully examined and discussed, and although Cardinal San Severino, moved, as we ought to believe, with holy zeal, expressed an opinion directly contrary, and thought that the Church had no need of so many superfluous congregations, it was finally concluded that a congregation could hardly be reckoned superfluous, which, in a new and totally different way from all other congregations, was consecrated to the service of the sick, even when dying or ill with the plague; so that it was thought worthy of being sanctioned and confirmed by the Holy See. The report was carried to the Supreme Pontiff by Cardinal Sans, the head of the Congregation, and he by an apostolic brief dated the 18th of March in the year 1586, the first of his Pontificate, approved and confirmed it, and gave faculties to Camillus and his companions to live together in poverty, chastity, obedience, and the service of the sick and plague-stricken: not bound by vows, either simple or solemn, but freely and voluntarily. And then he commanded them in the same brief to elect a superior, who was to be a priest, and whose office was to continue for three years; and gave them leave to go begging in Rome, with other favors, which for brief we omit.

Upon this Camillus was unanimously elected superior; with his new dignity he received a new spirit and new fervor, of which he soon gave an example. Without regard for himself, or any human respect, he took a sack on his back, and taking an English priest, named Roger, as his companion, he went through the streets of Rome in search of bread. They returned to the house with only the collection of one loaf and a few fragments, but with plenty of jibes and jokes which the people had loaded them with, as vagabonds and rascals. From

this time Camillus and all the congregation began to revere Cardinal Mondovi with affection and dutifulness, as not only their protector, but also their greatest benefactor and most affectionate father.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Another Apostolic Brief, which Permits the Congregation to Wear a Cross on Their Habits

Cardinal Mondovi was certainly the principal, but not the only benefactor, of the congregation. Other distinguished persons vied with him in helping it, and among them Cardinal Sans, who, in reporting to the Pope the sentiments of the Sacred Congregation, praised both the institute and its founder, in a way which made the Pope ardently desire to see him and know him. Camillus was told of this by Msgr. Cusano at the command of Cardinal Sans; and he did not delay a moment going to the feet of His Holiness at the Vatican; and after kissing his feet, with words full of holy simplicity and modesty, he made himself known as that unprofitable servant whom our Lord had deigned to make use of to begin the congregation just confirmed by His Holiness. For this he gave him most humble thanks, and from that time he placed it forever under the special protection of the Holy See. The Pope answered, that he was very glad to see him and to know him; that he would support and protect him in all circumstances, and that he very willingly received the congregation under his patronage.

Camillus was encouraged by the kindness of this answer, and went on to ask that he himself and

every other member of his congregation might have permission to wear a cross of red cloth on their cassock and mantle, so as to distinguish them from other Regular Clerks. The Pope consented, and added that it was very reasonable that these evangelical laborers, who were so distinct in their ministry, should be also distinguished by their habit, and ordered that a memorial should be presented. The memorial was presented and referred to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, who examined the figure of the cross drawn out according to the idea of Camillus, and approved of the request as not only becoming but necessary. Therefore, by another apostolic brief of June 26, 1586, "*Cum nos nuper*," permission was granted to Camillus and his companions to adorn their habit with the venerable sign.

The first time that they displayed it in public was on the solemn festival of the glorious Apostles Peter and Paul, when Camillus and eight of his religious, with the cross on the right side of their cassock and mantle, went to the Basilica of St. Peter. On their arrival there Camillus offered for ever to His Divine Majesty, not only himself, and his little flock that was present, but moreover, all that his heavenly Father might think fit to give him in the future. The people were greatly astonished at this new sight, and many were the guesses that they made. Some thought them Jesuits returned from the Indies: others, religious come from the Holy Sepulcher. And here we should deeply adore the dealing of Providence, which on this occasion verified the dream of Camillus's mother, mentioned in the first chapter of this history. She dreamed that she had brought forth a son with a cross on his breast, accompanied by many children decorated with the same sign, and feared that it augured horrible things to her family; but oh, how different was the event!

Camillus himself, in his old age, was staying at Bocchianico, and showed the cross to the people, saying to them: "Look at this cross, which my mother thought was to be the ruin and destruction of her house; how has God changed it into the resurrection of many, and an exaltation of His glory!"

Indeed, no long time elapsed from his receiving from the Pope the privilege of wearing the cross, before our Lord accredited it with a wonderful event. There came to Rome an old man of much experience and goodness, named Giovanni d' Adamo. This man was a member of the company of Brajon, instituted in Spain about this time for the service of the hospitals, but in a way very different from ours; and he was sent to Rome for the express purpose of getting it confirmed. The cause was committed to the ambassador of the Catholic King, who pleaded for the confirmation; but many cardinals and prelates answered him, that as the Pope had just confirmed the congregation of the Servants of the Sick, whoever wished to undertake that charitable office might obtain every facility by joining it. Adamo was irresolute and undecided what he was to do, when it happened one day that he took out of his bosom a little cross of white wood, which he had brought from Spain for the purpose of devotion, and which he wore round his neck, and saw with astonishment that it was no longer white but red, like ours. He understood by this what was the will of God; he went directly to relate it to Camillus; he demanded of him the habit; he was gratified, and he afterwards lived and died in the congregation, with the reputation of being a most excellent religious. This whole story was more than once told to me by Adamo himself.

CHAPTER TWENTY

*Camillus and the Congregation Remove to the Church
of the Maddalena — Death of Two Brothers,
One of Whom Summoned the Other*

Camillus still remained in the house in the Via delle Botteghe oscure, even after his congregation was erected and confirmed by the Supreme Pontiff. But considering what an inconvenience and occasion for ill speaking it was to have neither oratory nor church, so that the priests were obliged to go out every morning to say Mass, and the lay brothers to hear it, he resolved to search out a place more fit for him, and furnished with a church. So he turned his thoughts to a diligent examination of the various churches of Rome. At last, on the vigil of St. Mary Magdalen, he went into the church dedicated to her, to gain the indulgences, and when he had knelt down there to pray, it occurred to him that that church would exactly suit him. So recommending the matter to God, he went out with the intention of begging for it. He did so, and at last obtained it from the venerable archconfraternity of the Gonfalone, to which it belonged, by the sole assistance of Signora Felice Colonna, his benefactor, who was a relative of Carlo de' Massimi, one of the guardians of the church. And though then the conditions on which he obtained it were hard, yet in the course of time, by the kindness of Pope Gregory XIV. and the outlay of one thousand four hundred scudi, it was in the year 1622 freed from all burdens.

Then by means of a sum of three hundred scudi furnished to him by the piety of the Roman people, he hired some adjoining houses, and removed his congregation

(consisting then of about twelve or fifteen persons) there in December, 1586; and this was the first house and the mother of all the other houses of the order. In a short time his number was increased by the addition of F. Francesco Profeta, one of Camillus's first companions, and F. Paola Corneta, a Roman, an excellent divine, and well versed in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; he, however, died too soon for the congregation to reap the glory of his beautiful works in Greek, which he left unfinished. After the church was opened, the priests said Mass there, and the lay brothers confessed and communicated in it; two confessionals were placed in it, and F. Francesco Profeta and F. Paola Corneta were appointed to administer the sacrament of penance.

Before they had been a year in their new abode, Camillus received among others two young men, in whose deaths there was a remarkable circumstance, worthy of being recorded. One of them, named Luigi, a Frenchman, young in years, but far advanced in perfection, was in his agony; and with his last breath, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, like one who sees a vision, and kept saying: "St. Andrew, St. Andrew, who will go with me? Shall it be Brother Giacomo?" Brother Giacomo Martinelli was assisting him in quality of infirmarian, and hearing himself named so distinctly, asked if he were the Giacomo. The dying man then answered: "Thou art he, and therefore be prepared, because in a few days we shall be together in the same place," and with these words he died. After the burial of Luigi, Brother Giacomo felt in his heart some anxiety and suspicion, and desirous of quieting himself, he had a long interview with F. Paola Corneta, his confessor. The discreet Father listened to him, and knowing that the brother often read the dialogues of St. Gregory, he replied: "You know,

my brother, how many examples like this are mentioned in the book of the dialogues, which you read so often; so you would do well to be prepared for death, as your companion Luigi has summoned you." Brother Giacomo replied: "God's will be done always." He was at that time in the enjoyment of perfect health, and declared that he had never felt himself so well. But before a half-week was over, Giacomo fell very sick, and in a few days he also passed to our Lord.

By this event God doubtless wished to show how pleased He is when a soul is brought to serve Him, as in the case of Luigi, who had in a strange manner brought this Brother Giacomo into the congregation. These two young men were friends in the world when Luigi dedicated himself to the service of God in the congregation, and Giacomo remained in the world; he was then reduced to poverty, by being robbed of all that he possessed on his return from his native country, and looked for a master whom he might serve in the world. Luigi accidentally met him and asked him how he did. Giacomo answered: "Not in very good spirits, for I cannot find a master." Luigi replied: "Would you like me to find one?" The other answered that he should be very glad, so he took him by the hand and brought him to our house to Camillus, and begged him for the love of God to receive this dear companion among his other religious. Then turning to Giacomo, he said: "My brother, I have found you Jesus Christ for a master, are you content?" "Yes, I am," replied Giacomo, and he was received. They afterwards lived and died in the congregation as good and virtuous companions; and left us a firm hope that they are to be good and happy together for ever in Paradise.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Camillus Founds a House in Naples — Great Fruit Produced by the Congregation in Its Commencement

At this time there was living in Rome a certain Doctor Mira, a Spaniard (afterwards elected Bishop of Castellamare di Stabbia) who went almost every morning to hear Mass in our church. He had a most fervent spirit of charity towards the poor, so that there is no wonder that this kindred affection led him to form a cordial and particular friendship with Camillus. With this in his heart he set out for Naples; and as love is a passion that is all activity and all zeal, he immediately entered into negotiations with F. Alessandro Barla, priest of the oratory, for founding a house of our congregation in that large and populous city; assuring him that it would be inexpressibly useful to all the poor sick and dying persons. This was enough to persuade F. Alessandro, always most interested for the glory of God, for the increase of every work of piety, to take up the design most warmly. He first carried on a correspondence on it by letters, and afterwards sent fifty scudi to Camillus for the expenses of his voyage, and begged him to come as soon as possible. Camillus undertook the journey with thirteen of his religious, among whom was F. Biagio Operti, the superior elect of the new house. They arrived in Naples the 28th of October, 1588, the feast of the glorious Apostles SS. Simon and Jude, and were lodged in a house provided with all necessary furniture at the expense of F. Alessandro. The Archbishop, Annibale di Capua, and all the nobility gave them a most kind reception. To give a perfect idea of the immense work that

the congregation performed, it would be necessary to give some account of the deplorable state of the hospital for incurable diseases, where on the appearance of our religious a wonderful and unhopèd-for change took place: they divided themselves into different congregations to attend the hospital in company with the most honorable citizens, the nobles, and titled gentlemen of the whole kingdom. It was a pleasant sight, which cannot be praised too highly, and well worthy of finding more frequent imitators among the Christian nobility. It is beautiful to see the highest nobles imitating St. Louis, King of France, in his loving service of the poor sick; giving them water to wash their hands, carrying their food to them, making their beds, cleansing their tongues, binding their wounds, and lastly, like the good old man Tobias, burying the dead. I myself, to my own confusion, have seen many a one of them, although he had been brought up with great delicacy, presenting food to the sick men so covered with sores, and so filthy, that simply standing near them, let alone touching them, was enough to make any man sick. Such and so heroic are the actions which may be seen done in those hospitals, that in them you may plainly perceive how far the power of Christian charity extends when it has taken possession of the heart.

The charity of ladies in no way yielded to that of the gentlemen. To see them going about the sick, you would say that they could not be noble ladies whom all honor and respect, but slaves purchased to serve in the various hospitals. In them the example of SS. Paola and Eustochia are revived and multiplied, the former celebrated by St. Jerome for her great charity to the poor of the hospitals; the latter for her unwearied care of her dear mother Paola during her last sickness. Neither the dirt of the place nor the stench of the corrupting

sores deters them from ministering around the beds. The most deplorable cases are the best served; they comfort them, they feed them, they warm them, they fan them, they smooth their beds, they comb and tie up their hair. There is no work of charity too difficult or too disgusting for their Christian fervor. What shall I say of the copious provision of curtains, sheets, mattresses, shirts, counterpanes, and all other necessary linen with which these benefactors enriched the hospitals, and for the constant supply of which they provided a certain yearly income? What shall I say of the care with which each benefactor on his appointed day sends to the hospital from his own house food prepared with the greatest attention?

This improvement, which I have rather hinted at than described, may be truly said to have been begun by God's grace by our congregation; not because these companies were organized by our religious (though Camillus was always thinking of them and contriving them), but because our brethren by their example, and by their attending the hospital morning and evening, gave the first impulse to them. Nor was the aid given to the dying in Naples at all less. For seeing what Camillus and his followers did, the parish priests and religious of all kinds were filled with such holy emulation that they watched whole nights to assist the dying. This I say solely for the glory of God, whose pleasure it was that His servant Camillus, and the congregation founded by him, should furnish a provision for many wants of the sick.

It only remained for the congregation to give an example of that more dangerous and difficult work of charity, namely, the service of persons ill with pestilential or contagious disorders. An opportunity was not long delayed; and the readiness with which it was embraced, not only gave our religious a great help for-

ward, but also showed how strong was their vocation. There came from Spain to Naples a fleet of galleys full of infantry so infected with pestilence that the city, dreading a general contagion, refused to give them liberty to land and sent them to Pozzuolo, to perform quarantine in the port of Baja. The viceroy was soon informed that the miserable men were dying in multitudes, without any bodily or spiritual assistance, and had recourse to our religious to obtain it. He was immediately gratified; and five of them went straight to the hospital of the Annunziata, which was chosen to receive the mass of infected soldiers. They were almost all so reduced, so neglected and dirty, that the five ministers of Jesus Christ were obliged to divide their care in the following manner. The first received them with marks of hearty good-will, cut their nails and their hair; the next stripped off their clothes, from which came a smell more fetid than that of a decomposing dead body. The third refreshed them, and washed them from head to foot in a bath of perfumed water. The fourth wiped them; and the fifth put them into bed. In all this their labors were for the most part useless, for they were so starved, so weak, and so injured by the disasters of the voyage, that many died with the first morsel of food in their mouth; many after drinking the medicine, not having strength to throw it off, died in agony. Our religious sat up all day to help them; they watched at night to assist the souls of the dying and to guard the bodies of those who had died from the wolves and other ravenous animals.

From their labors in this hospital they passed to other labors in the little hospital of St. Giacomo, which had been opened in an old palace near the Colosseum, which is one of the antiquities of the place, and they de-

clared that they felt their heart breaking in their breast, from compassion for the wretched beings, men and women all huddled together on the ground, who were dying by hundreds, but scarcely any of the soldiers survived; and it was not possible that our religious should not now begin to feel the effects of their wonderful privations and the pestilential atmosphere which they had lived in. The greater part of them were ill and were brought to Naples to be cured; but only three of them obtained the blessing of going to a better life. The news was immediately sent to F. Camillus in Rome; and he with perfect resignation offered their souls to God, as the firstfruits of the multitudes who were afterwards to sacrifice themselves to Him by thus dying for the salvation of their neighbors. The names of the three were Giovanni Battista Butricone of Naples, Serafino da Galizano of Lucca, and Angelo della Marca; and their charity was so ardent that Giovanni Battista, when in delirium from the pestilent fever, kept on recommending souls in a language half Spanish, half Italian, and only ceased when he ceased to breathe. Serafino also in his delirium cried out: "Help, help that poor man, don't let him fall!" And, lastly, Angelo dying of the same fever, gave signs of an invincible patience and most burning charity.

So many virtuous and heroic actions performed in that beginning of the congregation kindled such a good feeling and esteem for it in the ladies Donna Ruberta Caraffa, Duchess of Mataloni, Donna Costanza delle Carretta, and Giulia delle Castella, that they expended the sum of fifteen thousand scudi in purchasing the professed house of Santa Maria Porta Cœli, where our religious are at present: but the lady Giulia delle Castella, a person of great goodness, was distinguished above all the others by continually assisting us with large alms,

so that she is deservedly revered as the real mother and foundress of the house.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Camillus Threatens Two Novices Who Returned to the World with the Vengeance of God — Accomplishment of the Prophecies — Two Others of His Religious Tempted by the Devil to Leave the Congregation

The force of good example which had induced the above-mentioned ladies to found and endow a house at Naples for the congregation, inspired also many young men of the city with the desire of entering it and becoming followers and children of Father Camillus, whom they prayed to receive them. In one single morning he received twelve of them, among whom was the author of the present Life; he took them with him to Rome, and clothed them with the habit on the 3d of March, 1589.

Now, as a remarkable thing happened to one of them, Francesco, I will relate it as a terrible example for other novices. He was received while a youth of not more than eighteen years in Naples, and put on the habit in Rome; but his father was so much displeased that he was near dying with grief. He had used every means to stop him, and when he went away from Naples, he followed him to Cascano, where he overtook him, and renewed his prayers, and entreaties, and tears, but in vain. The intense desire of obtaining what he wished at last drew him to Rome. There he had a long conversation in private with his son, and promised him that he should marry a most beautiful young lady, whom he knew to have great attractions for him, and said and did so much that at last he brought

him round. Overcome by this fearful and alluring temptation, the novice presented himself to Camillus to demand his former dress. Camillus was astonished at such lightness, and used every argument and every means to stay him. But seeing that it was of no use, and that the youth was quite obstinate in his idea and determined at all risks to go away, he would not any longer refuse him. So he ordered his clothes to be brought, and desirous at least of frightening him with threats, he fixed his eyes on his face many times, as if he were reading there the punishment that was to come upon him, and in the presence of his father and of many of our religious, he said to him: "Well, brother, as you are determined to return to the world, without regard to the kindness of God in having delivered you from it, I give you to understand that you will come to a bad end and die by the hand of justice, and remember the day in which I told you so." Then turning to his father, he warned him likewise, that he should have little joy by this son of his, and that he would spend all he had in the vain endeavor to deliver him; and with these words he dismissed them in peace.

This happened the last day of March, 1589, on Good Friday. And, wonderful to relate, Francesco returned to Naples and took the degree of doctor of laws, and married, to the satisfaction of his father, the young lady whom he loved and who had been promised to him; they lived together some time in great peace and harmony. But his love cooled by degrees, and discord succeeded, and then cruelty followed, and because of a perhaps groundless suspicion, he killed his wife, who was with child, and afterwards he killed the maid-servant, who was also in the same condition, and then a house-servant, whom, in his rabid jealousy, he believed to be the cause of his dishonor; and he had a little before, with the same fury and for the same

suspicion, murdered an old maid-servant, and buried her under the foundation of the house. For these enormities he was condemned to lose his head; and although his father spent all that he had to save his life, the sentence was executed in the Mercato of Naples, on the last day of March, 1598, being Monday in Holy Week, and with him was executed a servant who was found guilty of being an accomplice in his crimes; so that the fearful threats that Camillus pronounced to father and son were exactly fulfilled. Francesco himself knew this truth and confessed it with tears to many of our religious who went to console him in prison after his condemnation; he told them that he was brought to this miserable end by having left the congregation; that from the day he left it, a day which he could never forget, the threats of Camillus had been constantly before his eyes and in his heart; he begged them, too, not to forget to assist him with their prayers, most of all in the last terrible moment of his ignominious death. Our congregation was amazed at this event, and most of all, those who were present when Camillus, by a superhuman light, warned the unhappy man; and so much the more, because the warning given the last day of March in Holy Week, was also fulfilled in Holy Week, on the last day of March, nine years after.

Another thing, not very dissimilar to the preceding, had taken place a short time before in the case of Brother Girolamo Cuciniere, in our house at Rome. He had made too much haste in going from the altar where he had received Holy Communion, to the refectory for his breakfast. Camillus admonished him for it, telling him that a person who could not bridle his appetite was not fit to be numbered among the servants of God, and imposed on him a slight penance. This he obstinately refused to perform, and demanded his clothes in order

that he might return to the world. Camillus was mortified at this and tried with many fervent appeals to turn him from his unadvised resolution; but seeing him grow more and more hardened in it, he said to him at last that he would very soon repent of leaving the service of God without any reason whatever; that he ought to consider better what might come upon him, and not allow himself to be seduced by the devil, who is used to attach himself to men by a noose of silk. And with these words he dismissed him.

This was wonderfully verified. On his leaving the congregation, he hired himself as servant to a man who coined false money, who soon after fell into the hands of justice and was imprisoned with all his household, among whom was the unfortunate Girolamo, who was, however, innocent, and knew nothing of the matter. Still he had to suffer; and when the master was tied up to the pillory, the servant, Girolamo, who had been warned by Camillus that the devil was used to tie up men with a noose of silk, was flogged through the streets of Rome and then tied up by the hands under the feet of his master. And in this position he was seen by many of our Fathers on their return from the hospital of St. Spirito, with shuddering and compassion.

At this same period two events came to pass which showed how desirous the devil was to damage the newly founded congregation, and how many schemes he brought to bear to deprive it of its best laborers. Among the twelve whom Camillus received at Naples, there was a priest named Cesare d'Agostino. As soon as he had put on the habit at Rome, he was seized by a disease that appeared to be leprosy; he bore it with unconquerable patience and was always repeating the words of the holy Job: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away;

blessed be the name of the Lord." The devil, full of envy and rage at this rare virtue, appeared to him in the shape of Brother Stefano of Modena (a religious of great perfection, who died in Mantua, in 1622, leaving behind the reputation of sanctity) and came into his room at noonday, and pretending to pity his misfortune said to him, among other things, that people who would tempt God generally had to suffer as he did: that he had committed a great fault in leaving his former state of life, when, though in the world, he used to take the discipline, wear hair shirts, and fast frequently; and that he might know that it was so from seeing himself so punished, confined to his bed, and of no use either to himself or others, and that he would do wisely to leave the congregation, whose bread he was eating for nothing, and return to his own house. The sick man was most grieved by this artful speech and believed that this visit was made by Camillus's orders, either to try his perseverance or because he would not any longer allow him to remain in his congregation. So he sent to call him and complained bitterly that, after bringing him from Naples, his own country, he wanted to put aside all compassion and charity, and dismiss him. The good Father was surprised at being thus unexpectedly upbraided, and to deliver him from that false suspicion, he assured him that Stefano was staying at the infirmary of Tor di Nona, and that some days had passed since he had been near the house. But as all this could not quiet the sick man, he sent for Stefano. On his arrival he was questioned in the sick man's presence, whether he had been to the house that day, and had talked to him about returning to the world. Stefano was astonished, made the sign of the cross many times, and declared outright that it was a rank imposture, for that he had not been near the house for eight days. Cesare,

gathering from Stefano's denial, and from his visitor's having described minutely the penance he performed when in the world, that it could only be the devil who had acted the part of adviser, suddenly rose from his bed, and putting on his zimarra, by the help of the brother, was led into the church, where he knelt before the Blessed Sacrament and with tears made a vow to live and die in the congregation; this vow he faithfully kept, and died in a short time with sentiments of singular piety.

The violence with which the devil assaulted a brother named Lorenzo was much greater. He was standing warming himself at the fire, when the devil again in the shape of Fra Stefano, rushed out madly from the choir, knocked him down, and clasped his hands around his throat as if he would choke him. Some of the brethren ran to him when they heard his shrieks and found him with his eyes nearly starting from his forehead; so they laid him on a bed, where he was obliged to remain many days, free indeed from the attacks of the devil, but still unable to shake off his fear, which was so deep seated in him that he trembled all over with fright whenever he met Fra Stefano about the house so that he was at last obliged to leave us and enter a different order.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

The Cardinals Paleotto and Mondovi Confer for the First Time with Camillus and with the Holy See, about Erecting the Congregation into an Order

Three years had scarcely passed since Pope Sixtus V had confirmed the congregation, before it was proposed to erect it into a religious order. Cardinal Paleotto

was the person who proposed this. Our brethren had been often summoned to assist and console some of his courtiers on their deathbeds, and the good cardinal, who never abandoned them, was so pleased with what they did, and thought it so fitted to save many souls in their last dangerous conflict, that he made over and over again most earnest entreaties to Camillus to send to Bologna, his Archiepiscopal See, and native place, some of his religious to found a house there, promising him every favor and assistance. Camillus excused himself on account of the want of priests by which the congregation was hampered, as the number of the brethren who could obtain sufficient to be ordained "*sub titulo patrimonii*" was very small. The cardinal remarked that this defect was very serious, as it put a stop to the increase of the congregation, and said that he would talk it over with Cardinal Mondovi, the protector of it. The two cardinals, after various reflections, came to the conclusion that the only means of getting plenty of priests was to erect it into an order: and from that time, that is, about July, 1589, this business was begun and continued in the court of Rome.

The zeal of its promoters was wonderfully increased by the following circumstance: Camillus went to Bologna by the express command of Cardinal Paleotto, with Curzio and two other companions on the 28th of October, in the same year, and precisely for want of priests he was unable to found a house there. After his return to Rome, he consulted with several men of prudence, and by the advice of the principal of his own religious, he composed, and put down on paper, a form, in which he drew out the form of his institute and the method of its government. Camillus then presented it to Cardinal Mondovi, and he presented it to Pope Sixtus, to have it confirmed by his Apostolic authority. The Pope was himself very

much inclined to advance a work that was nursed in his own arms, so he referred it to the Congregation of Sacred Rites, then composed of the Cardinals Gesualdo, Mondovi, Paleotto, Colonna, Borromeo and Sfondrato. While they were employed in examining the proposition, the opinions of the persons who enjoyed greatest credit in Rome were published. Some doubted whether it was expedient to allow solemn profession to be made, and their argument was this, that the institute, being continually occupied in external works of charity, could not last long, or at least would soon lose its spirit, if these works were to be performed by persons bound by vows: they therefore judged it to be safer and more advantageous to leave it open, so that unfit members might be expelled. Among others who were of this opinion were St. Philip Neri, Father Toledo, then theologian of the palace and afterwards cardinal, and Cardinal Aldobrandini, who was afterwards Pope. Others, on the contrary, maintained the convenience and profit of vows. "How else can you expect," said they, "the continuance of the institute, and consequently the immense advantage which it promises in time of plague or epidemic diseases? How could it be otherwise than that the laborers would gradually lose their vocation for a work most loathsome to the senses, generally performed in infected and filthy places; and most of all, in time of contagion, when there is such an evident risk of death? Why leave the good liberty to abandon the institute whenever they pleased? What better means could be devised for the multiplication of priests, than giving persons an opportunity to be ordained, 'sub titulo paupertatis?' And how much greater fervor might you expect in persons who are dedicated to God by solemn vows, who would freely expose themselves to every danger for the love of God and for the sal-

vation of souls!" To the argument that the order would lose its spirit if it was obliged to retain bad members within it, it was answered that future Popes would assuredly find means to purge the order of such persons; but that at present they must decree that profession should be imposed, as a foundation and base for the whole building. This was the opinion of Camillus himself, and of Cardinals Paleotto, Mondovi, and Sfondrato, and it was adopted by the Congregation of Rites; it only remained that Cardinal Gesualdo should carry the report to the Pope; but while they were waiting for a fitting day, the Pope died. Camillus was intensely grieved at the loss of a Pope so good and holy, and such a friend of his institute, that he had every reason to believe that, as he had had the kindness to confirm the congregation, so he would doubtless have also erected it into an order.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

Camillus Succors the Sick at Santa Maria Degli Angioli in the Baths of Diocletian

A little before the death of Sixtus, while the affair of the profession was being agitated, an excellent opportunity presented itself to Camillus of showing his burning charity to the poor. There prevailed on the Quirinal Hill at Rome a disease so badly that it was almost certain death to be attacked by it. The greatest mortality was among the velvet weavers, whom Sixtus had brought to Rome to introduce the art, and had lodged in the tract of ground between his own villa and the church of St. Maria degli Angioli. It was truly a most piteous sight to see so many faithful dying without any succor. In some houses might be seen father, mother,

sons, and daughters lying on the same bed, with no one to help them; so that those who did not die of the disease, died of want and hunger. Camillus was informed of this state of things by some of our religious, who had been called to attend them in their agony, and it stirred up in his breast so tender a pity for the poor creatures that he lost not a moment in rendering them assistance. With some money that he begged from Cardinals Gesualdo, Paleotto, and Salviati, he bought a donkey, and causing everything necessary to be prepared at our house, he began to send them every day two loads of provisions. He generally went himself with four of his religious, every morning and evening, to superintend the distribution. They began at the Quattro Fontane and went from door to door dispensing bread, wine, toast, and water, broths of various kinds, eggs, meat, chickens, gruel, barley-water, cakes, and pastry, and everything suited to them, feeding the worst cases with their own hands, according to the prescription of the physician, who, as well as all the medicines, was provided by Camillus from the hospital.

They found many houses where all were so ill that none could open the door, so that they were obliged to get in through the windows. After giving them food, they made their beds, washed their plates, dressed them, and rolled up the babies in their swaddling clothes, whose neglected condition and cries were enough to move the hardest heart, especially when it was necessary to remove them from their mothers, to prevent infection from their milk or from their breath. Anybody who had seen the good Father Camillus rolling and unrolling the babies would have been quite struck, and could not have helped praising the God of love, when he considered how a man brought up in the school of

arms could have learned in the school of charity to perform with so much skill and care the office of a nurse or a mother. What then must those poor people have thought of him, who found themselves delivered from death by his means? They revered him as an angel sent from heaven. And they had reason to do so: for there was no trouble that he would not take for love of them. In spite of his sore leg, in spite of the heat of the weather, he was running about for the medicines ordered for them, and carried them with such diligence that he would never wait to converse even with the most noble persons. Once when he was hurrying along for this object, he was asked by a cardinal how his sick folks got on; he answered shortly: "They are getting on better." But as the cardinal asked for a more detailed account, Camillus said to him with holy simplicity and plainness: "Illustrious lord, I beseech you for the love of God not to keep me waiting, or I shall be too late with this medicine." And then he lifted up his cloak and showed him a little pot; and went his way, leaving the cardinal surprised and astonished at such fervent charity. Another time, when we was taking food to the same sick, he fell in with Cardinal Sfondrato on the road, who was so pleased with his prudent distribution of his alms that he made his carriage stop, and waited a long while to look at it: and from this time he held the institute in such esteem that, when he was made Pope, he not only granted the profession and changed the congregation into an order, but also enriched it with great privileges and assisted it with abundant alms. Just after he was made Pope, he sent to our house of the Maddalena seven hundred scudi, besides fifty scudi which he allowed to us monthly.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Camillus Feeds and Clothes Many Poor in Different Parts of Rome, in the Year of Great Scarcity

After the disease mentioned in our last chapter had ceased, and after the deaths of Sixtus and his successor Urban VII (who was elected November the 15, 1590, and died on the 27th of the same month), Cardinal Sfondrato was elected Pope on the 7th of December, and took the name of Gregory XIV. During the reign of this Pontiff that horrible famine commenced, the greatest that has happened in these times. After the famine there succeeded, as generally happens, such a pestilence that in the district of Rome alone sixty thousand persons died of cold and hunger. It is horrible even to read of a calamity: think, then, what must have been their affliction, who saw men dying in the city under the benches of the butchers and other shops, reduced to feed on grass like cattle, and to eat even dead cats and dogs and any filthy food they could find; so that our religious found more than one dead body with the mouth full of grass, which the poor man had no strength to swallow. Although Pope Gregory gave most liberally to relieve this calamity, yet, as it was so general, the generosity of the Pontiff could not extend to every case.

Camillus was melted with compassion, especially when he heard at night the mournful voices of the starving wretches begging a morsel of bread. That his compassion might not be useless, he ordered that every day a great copper full of soup, of corn or rice should be made in our house; then he collected in the courtyard as many beggars as he could, and having made

them all recite aloud a Pater and an Ave, he distributed to them as much as he considered enough to keep them alive for that day; and some days the number amounted to four hundred. After taking care of their bodies, he did not leave their souls uncared for, and showed them most forcibly the deformity of sin, which forced God's justice to inflict all these evils upon us. When he dismissed the multitude, he made some of the most squalid and miserable stay with him, to confess, to clean themselves, to have their hair cut, and their clothes mended; and he often robbed the wardrobe of the house to clothe the ragged. But knowing that much more was required to save the life of very many, who when the winter came, which in that year, 1590, was exceedingly rigorous, were exposed to die of the cold, he had recourse to the well-known charity of the Roman people, who, following the example of their generous ancestors, contributed many hundred scudi, with which he immediately provided a great quantity of hats, shoes, cloth, and linen, and had plenty of shirts, trousers, coats, and stockings made, which he distributed to those who were in most need, some of whom he dressed with his own hands.

To show how tender was the charity of Camillus, it happened many times that some of them gambled away the clothes that had been given them and then ran away to avoid being seen in that naked condition. He then, like a most loving father, went after them again; and not only was he incapable of feeling the least anger against them, but he even reproved those who spoke disrespectfully of them. Some people of the world, who saw him running after some of these fugitives, said to him: "Let them be, Father, they are such rascals that they have gambled away all the new clothes

that had been given them." These words pierced his heart as if they had been swords, so grieved was he to hear his Lord Jesus, whom he recognized so vividly in the persons of those poor men, so calumniated. For the same reason he reproached one of our religious. "What, my brother," said he, "do you see nothing but rags on these poor creatures? and do you not consider that under these rags may be concealed Jesus Christ Himself, as it happened to St. Gregory, who often gave alms to an angel who came to him like a beggar?"

It would be impossible to recount how many other opportunities of doing works of mercy were given him by the frightful calamities of that year. Whenever he met any poor people badly clad and numbed with cold, he took his own cloak off his shoulder and put it on the poor man's, whom he made walk with him either to the hospital or to our house, where he had prepared a little hospital. Often again, when it was raining, if he met any poor creatures, when they were only two, he made them walk one on each side and share his cloak with him; when they were more than two, he ordered his companion to do the same. Once he was told that a poor man had fallen into a cesspool, so he ran in great haste to get him out, and without showing any disgust at the filth and abominations with which he was covered, he led him to the hospital, where he carefully washed him, wiped him, and put him to bed, and so saved his life.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Camillus Goes to Look for the Poor in the Vaults and Stables of Rome

It is with the greatest propriety that love is compared to fire, because, like fire, it is always seeking new matter to consume. In the same way Camillus, not satisfied with the wonderful labors for the relief of the poor that we have related, as soon as he heard that many of them were dying in the vaults and stables of Rome, ordered two barrows, like those in common use in the city, to be provided, and assisted by four porters began to go himself, and to send eight of his religious to look for the poor creatures in the ancient vaults. Whenever they entered into one of them, they cried out with a loud voice: "God save you, O sons of God!" and they heard in answer the vaults resounding with the groans of the dying. Every one carried with him a bag of bread, a bottle of wine, fresh eggs, sweetmeats, and other things to revive them. In the cistern, now called the Sette Sale, and in the ruins of the palace of the Cæsars, some poor fellows were found so frozen and emaciated that to make them swallow a morsel of food, it was necessary to force their mouths open with an instrument which they carried with them for that purpose.

Any one can imagine what must have been the conditions of those wretched people, lying on the ground in the middle of the winter, in damp underground vaults, without food or fire, or, if they could sometimes light a fire, blinded and tormented with the smoke. Some were found chewing straw, like cattle; and there was a

father who insisted on breathing his last with his head resting on the dead body of his son, which served him for a horrible kind of pillow; and it required no small pains to cure him of this mad whim which had been brought on by intense grief and suffering. All these were taken care of by Camillus and his religious; the dead were carried to the cemeteries, and the most weak to the hospitals; and when there was no longer any room there, to the hospital in our house, where they were provided with the same food as was given to the brethren when they were sick.

I cannot find words strong enough to tell how Camillus grieved at seeing those vaults, or rather tombs, of the living. Those old walls which heard his sighs and groans will bear witness to them on the day of judgment. We will now pass from the vaults to the stables, for even there many starving and sick persons were collected, nearly buried in the dunghills, which had invited them by the little warmth they could find there. But Camillus, when he saw them so disfigured and dirty, felt his heart breaking for pity that these members of Jesus Christ should be reduced to such a cruel necessity, as to be obliged to bury themselves alive in dunghills, as if death and the grave had refused them. Whenever he found them, he set to work to clean them from all their filth: he restored them by putting food or liquids into their mouths; he went to boil some eggs for them in the nearest public house, and after giving them a hearty embrace, he took them home with him to restore them thoroughly.

In a place near the Porta del Popolo he found at least eight persons half dead with cold and hunger. He consoled them, and encouraged them to get up and come with him to the hospital; as he was walking with

them, when they had got as far as the church of St. Rocco, one of them fell down through weakness and could not get up again. Camillus did not know what to do in this strait; and as he was considering, a carriage full of gentlemen passed by: so he besought them for the love of God to take with them the sick man and carry him to the hospital. Camillus put forth his prayers with such sweet simplicity that the generous and Christian gentlemen instantly got down and lent him the whole carriage; he thanked them from his heart, and without losing time in ceremony, he put his poor men inside and drove them in triumph to the hospital.

Another time he fell in with a crowd of vagabonds, who would not go into the hospital of St. Sisto, which the government had appointed for their reception, and so were guarded to be put into a boat at the Ripetta and carried away from Rome. Camillus pitied these poor wretches so deeply that he followed them weeping as though they were being led off to execution. Every step of the way as he was walking, he kept beseeching the officer who had to see them on board, to stay the execution of his orders a short time, while he went to speak to the governor, from whom he hoped to obtain a respite for them. But seeing that the officer would not listen to him, burning with his usual zeal, he burst out: "What," said he, "can Rome support so many Jews, and can it not feed these few Christians? Only give them to me, I will feed them at my own expense while they live, and when they die, surely Rome, the mother of all goodness, will not refuse sufficient ground to bury them in." As these entreaties were of no use, and the poor fellows were being driven on board, Camillus, who had an idea that he should at last obtain what he wanted, went and held them with holy violence and would not allow them to go in-

to the boat. The officer was furious and threatened him with the galleys, if he would not give over resisting the orders of the magistrates. For all this the unconquerable charity of Camillus was not to be dampened; so he tried what humility would do to soften him; falling on his knees before him, in the presence of a great crowd, with his eyes swimming with tears and his arms extended in the form of a cross, he again entreated him either to let all remain or to make him a present of some of the most ragged of them. This prayer was so efficacious that the officer relented and gave him leave to take the two whom he chose as being the most emaciated; he was very sorry for the others who were obliged to go; and as he could do no more, he kept following them with his eyes and comforting them with his voice, telling them, that as they could find no comfort in this life of misery, they should at least try to keep their soul alive, and to die in the grace of God. And then lifting up his eyes to heaven, he prayed God to show mercy on all those desolate beings who were His own creatures; and either to soften His anger towards the holy city or to take away his life, so that he might not have to witness its destruction. Then he turned his eyes to the boat, and as it was pushed off from the shore, his heart seemed to be torn from his breast, and he stood without motion on the bank looking at them, blessing them, and, as it were, recommending their souls. Nor did he go away before they were entirely out of sight. At length he went and took with him those two precious pledges that the officer had left with him, to his house, where such care was taken of them that they not only survived but also recovered their health. This last piece of zeal cost Camillus a scolding from Monsignor Matteucci, the governor, who advised him not to let his charity run

away with him again in such a way as to make him resist the orders of his superiors. The true servant of God begged his pardon most humbly, and then congratulated himself for having suffered some little reproach for the sake of the poor of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

Camillus Assists the Poor in the Hospital of St. Sixtus and in the Granary Delle Carozze, with the Loss of Five of His Own Religious

Although cardinals and prelates and religious and rich men joined together in a holy bond of charity to relieve, as they best could, the calamities of that year of disasters, and many of them established in their own houses little hospitals to lodge and take care of the beggars; still the great mass of them was collected together in the hospital of St. Sixtus, and more than three thousand died there within a few days.

Camillus could not endure to see this without trying to remedy it, or at any rate taking care that they should have the holy sacraments before they died; so he went with eight of his religious to assist them. The place was so insufferably dirty and infected that it was a wonder that they did not all lose their lives. Indeed, all except Camillus became dangerously ill, and five of them died. Their names, which ought to be had in eternal remembrance, were Leandro Magnani, of Ferrara; Orazio Tozio, of Florence; Orazio Soppillo, of Naples; Benedetto Michele, of Scorano, in Apulia; and another Orazio, of Umbria, who was only a novice.

I may say of these persons without fear of contradiction that, like the martyrs, they gave up their souls

to God by a novel and most painful kind of torture, as they were obliged to endure the horrible stench, and much more the bites of the numberless insects of which the place was full and which were found all over the tables, and even in the bread. This filthiness, which no sweeping could cure, nor even the precaution of throwing all the bundles of the poor into the river, turned the stomachs of all five of them, and they sickened of the fever, and as they could not retain a single morsel of food, in a few days they died, quite contented at having given up their lives for the salvation of others.

Now, as the horrid stench which proceeded from that hospital made people afraid that all Rome would be infected, by the advice of Camillus, who was deputed by the Pope to superintend this business, a large granary was hired in the Strada delle Carozze, near the place called the Schola Greca, and there all those poor people were removed, as the place was farther distant from the inhabited part of the city. Camillus continued for two months to provide for their corporal and spiritual wants, and I know not how to describe his unwearied labors in this most burdensome task.

To the eyes of the world those poor people were the vilest and most despised of men; Camillus, who was enlightened by holy love, looked on them all as sons of princes. He would have everything of the best kind for them, and in the broths and light food of those who were very ill, he had powdered pearls and drugs of great value mixed up. It cost him more than six thousand scudi, contributed partly by the Pope and partly by the Roman people.

One of his most laborious duties was to walk up and down through the muddy streets of Rome, looking for bread and corn that was necessary to feed such a

multitude; and once when he could not obtain enough, he went boldly to Monsignor Centurione, the prefect of supplies, and begged him to sell a few bushels of grain. The prefect excused himself on the plea of the scarcity which reigned in the city. Then Camillus, with a voice full of zeal, said to him: "Most illustrious Sir, if my poor folks suffer or die from your withholding corn, I protest against it in the sight of God and cite you to appear before His tremendous judgment seat, where you will have to give a strict account of it;" and with these words he went away. These words of his so frightened the good prelate that he ordered whatever corn he wanted to be given to him.

Another time when he found himself in the same case, it came into his mind that there was in our house a sack of flour put by against any extreme distress. So he, thinking only of feeding Jesus Christ in His poor, and of laying up this flour in the storehouse of heaven, took with him two porters and went to the house and brought it away with him to the hospital. Hearing afterwards that Father Francesco Profeta, who was governor of the house, and some other religious murmured at this, saying that, so long as he provided for the miseries of the hospital, he did not care about leaving his own religious unprovided for, and that in a time of such extreme scarcity, he rebuked them sharply, calling them men of little faith and less charity, as they had no confidence in that God who feeds the birds of the air without their taking pains to plow or to sow; and he left them not a little mortified.

Indeed, it is easy to see that God's providence watched over our congregation, for as soon as the flour had been taken out of the house, we found a baker so benevolent and kind that, as long as the famine lasted,

he regularly brought, at sunrise every morning, a basket of the best white bread, so good that our religious never remembered having eaten better.

Nor was this the only effect of God's kindness; for He so ordered things that, during the whole time of the famine, the baker never asked to be paid his bill; and the congregation, though rich only in poverty, and without any income whatever, was never in want of anything; that the brethren who were sent out to beg bread never returned with empty bags; and that even the rich Jews, edified by the charity that they saw practiced at the granary hospital, were forward to contribute.

The deaths at the granary were so numerous that there was no more room in the cemetery of the neighboring church, so Camillus, with the leave of the Pope, marked out a Campo Santo in the grounds adjoining. Before I take leave of this place, I must mention that Camillus often sat up whole nights making mattresses and stuffing them with straw; and even when he was returning to the house to rest himself, the weariness and pain that he felt in his wounded leg was so great that he had the greatest difficulty in getting into bed.

Before bringing this chapter to an end, I must relate a fact which many persons, perhaps, will find it difficult to believe. Yet why not believe it of a man given up to despair? One of the persons who went to this hospital to be cured was a man who said that he was a native of Romagna. The priest went to him to confess him, but was refused, and told that he would not confess, for his particular case was very desperate, as he was given up body and soul to the devil, to whom he had given a paper signed with his own hand, and

written with blood from a vein in his own forehead. The confessor used every argument that his zeal suggested to him to deliver him from this wicked obstinacy, but could get no other answer from the unhappy man, but that he did not want to have anything to do with God, for he was resolved, living and dead, to be with the devil. The priest stayed with him arguing the whole day, but in vain. In the evening he thought it best to let him rest awhile, intending to attack him again the next morning. Just before midnight the person whom the Father had left to look after him was called away to attend on another sick person, and when he returned, he found the desperate man's bed empty and only his hat and his shirt remaining, both of them marked "S. Gio. Laterano." The guard was frightened and alarmed the house and searched every ward, but without success; so that they considered it clear that the devil had carried him off body and soul, as he had resigned himself to him. And this opinion gained great strength from the fact that there was no place where he could get out, every door being shut, every window closed, and besides, secured with iron bars, and wooden shutters. At the same time that he disappeared his confessor was sleeping and dreamed that his room was shaken by a terrible earthquake: the noise awaked him, and he saw such a blaze that he thought the hospital was on fire; he got up and ran to the infirmary, where he found every one employed in looking for the unhappy man. His clothes, with the bundles of all those who had died, were sold to the Jews.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

*Pope Gregory XIV Grants the Profession and Erects the
Congregation into an Order — Camillus is
Elected General*

At last the famine and pestilence came to an end, and Camillus, somewhat relieved of his burdensome cares, determined to put off no longer the affair of the profession, which had been delayed by the unlucky death of Sixtus and the calamities of the times. He, therefore, ordered the whole congregation to pray for the Divine assistance; and God was pleased to remove every obstacle and to inspire Pope Gregory XIV to attend to the petition of Cardinal Mondovi, and by a *motu proprio*, with great pleasure to himself, he made it a free order, independent of any other. He also gave to Camillus and his companions, faculties to take the four solemn vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and perpetual service of the sick and infected.

Those who wish to know the privileges, graces, favors, immunities, and other high prerogatives with which he enriched the order must consult the Bull published on September 21, 1591, the first and last year of the too short pontificate of Gregory.

In the conduct of this affair a new proof of God's kindness was given; for Camillus, thinking that the Father who was deputed to procure the publication of the Bull, went to work too slowly in having the petition presented, as if he had a presentiment of what was to happen, and was moved by a supernatural impulse, resolved to present it himself to the Datario; and without the least care of being thought troublesome, he said and did so much

that he got the petition signed by the Pope just one day and a half before the latter was laid up with his last illness, namely, on the 5th of September, 1591. So that it is most probable that the least delay would either have prevented the congregation from being erected into an order at all, or at any rate would have put it off many years, since Innocent IX, the successor of Gregory, was averse to founding new orders; and his successor, Clement VIII, was not only averse to founding new ones, but through a zeal for holy reforms was even inclined to dissolve some that had been already founded.

However, the Bull was published, and Camillus, desirous of establishing the order firmly, determined to make his solemn profession as soon as possible, and thought of choosing for this important action the feast of St. Michael, to whom he had a peculiar devotion. The obstacles to this were so great that he was obliged to put it off till the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. By this it was made evident that the Queen of Angels wished to show that her Divine Son had granted the profession to the brethren at the intercession of His mother. Camillus was converted to God on the feast of the Purification of Mary: on the feast of her Assumption he was inspired to found the congregation, which he began on the feast of her Nativity, and it was only on the feast of her Immaculate Conception that he could put the finishing stroke to the work by making the profession.

But as it was ordered in the Bull that a general should be first elected, Camillus, fearing that this burden would be imposed on him, assembled together all his religious and begged them by no means to think of electing him, because he was a man of no learning or education; besides being so weak in his leg and wearied out with his labors. The more readily to persuade them, he brought

forward the example of the country people, who after using a spade for a long while, put it up in a corner, as if to rest it. He, therefore, prayed them to leave him in a corner, and not impose any office upon him, so that he might be able to attend without distraction to his own salvation and the service of the poor. These prayers were frustrated by the goodness and merits of the person who made them, and he was nominated and unanimously elected general during his life, according to the terms of the Bull, not only by the thirty-five brethren in Rome, but also by those in Naples.

After this election he appointed all those who were to make their profession on the approaching day; and he admitted none except persons who had lived irreproachably for two years in the congregation at Rome. Each of them was also for greater precaution approved by the suffrages of the rest and pronounced worthy of the honor. On the same day, that is, on the 7th of December, Camillus, resolving to live for the future in holy poverty and to follow his crucified Lord in His destitution, renounced by a legal act the six thousand scudi that Fermo Calvi had given him as patrimony when he was ordained priest.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Camillus and His Companions Make Their Solemn Profession

When the happy day, the eighth of December, consecrated to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, had arrived, a crowd of people had collected in the church of the Maddalena, to gain the plenary indulgence which the Pope had granted to all who were present at the function, and Monsignor Paolo Albero, Arch-

bishop of Ragusa, celebrated the most Holy Sacrifice, after which Camillus knelt down at his feet, and at first making profession of his faith, he made his solemn profession in the following words: "I, Camillus of Lellis, profess, and solemnly vow to our Lord God and to thee most illustrious Lord (deputed by our Holy Father for this special office), in the presence of the most holy Virgin His Mother, and all the court of heaven, perpetual poverty, chastity, and obedience, and, as the chief office of our Institute, perpetual service of the sick, even of those attacked by pestilence, according to the rule of living contained in the Bull, for the Congregation of Servants of the Sick, and in its constitutions published, or to be published, by authority of the Apostolic See." This profession was accepted by the Archbishop in the following manner: "And I, Paolo Albero, by the authority with which I am invested, accept thy profession, in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Then Camillus sat down on the Archbishop's seat and received the professions of the rest in order, as their names were called out by the notary, making use of the following form: "I, N., solemnly profess and vow to our Lord God, and to you, Reverend Father General, who stand in the place of God, in the presence of the Most Holy Virgin, His Mother, and the whole court of heaven, perpetual poverty, chastity, and obedience; and, as the chief duty of our Institute, perpetual service of the poor sick, even though attacked by pestilence, according to the rule of life contained in the Bull of the Congregation of the Ministers of the Sick, and in its constitutions published, or to be published, by the authority of the Apostolic See." A public act of all this was drawn up by Giov. Prisco de Juvenalibus, Capitoline notary. The persons who made the profession were, besides Camillus, Father Francesco

Profeta, Father Biagio Opertis, Angelino Bruggia, Stefano da Modena, Francesco Lapis, John Bowding, Nicolo Clemente, Antonio Barbarossa, Prospero Fontecchia, Luca Antonio Catalano, Giacomo Antonio di Meo, Gasparo Maccario, Paolo Rende, Francesco Pizzorno, Giovanni Cocozello, Sanzio Cicatelli, Goffredo Stella, Baldassare Fonseca, Gio. Antonio di Muzio, Scipione Carrozza, Antonio Peruccio, Marcello Mansio, Alessandro Gallo, Annibale Ramondino, and Giulio Cesare Altavilla. When Camillus had received the professions of all these, he went to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice, and communicated all the newly professed, whether priests or laymen.

Then, on the evening of the same day, he called them into his presence and embraced them all with the tenderest affection in token of his joy. After this he knelt down on the ground and protested that he renounced whatever he had or could have in the world, and begged, as an alms of all the order then assembled, the loan of the clothes he wore on his back: nor was it possible to make him rise from his humble posture before all the newly-professed had granted him, as an alms, the loan of his clothes, his bed, and whatever else he had in his room.

This example kindled such a fervor in all the rest that they all knelt down and made the same renunciation; and many of them went eagerly to search their rooms and brought out everything they found there, not excepting even the smallest and most trifling things, and they cast them all at the feet of Camillus, as a sign of universal, entire, and perfect renunciation.

After a few days they all went, out of gratitude, on a visit to the Seven Churches, in thanksgiving to His Divine Majesty; and on the road Camillus discoursed sublimely on the marvels that Almighty God had wrought in giving life and increase to the order. And then making them all

sit down in a vault which they passed on the road, he made them a sermon on the hope that they ought to place on the Divine protection, taking for his text the words of Jesus Christ: "Fear not, little flock."

Such was the power of his words in persuading them to persevere in their undertaking and to advance ever more and more in perfection and trust in God, who he hoped would in time multiply this little flock and plant branches of it in all parts of the world, that some of them shed tears of joy and desired to go into infidel lands and suffer martyrdom and die as victims of charity sacrificed for the service of the plague-stricken. What power a virtuous act of a superior has over the minds of his inferiors! How much more holy would men become, if, as time went on, they persevered in the first fervor of their resolutions, made under the influence of holy inspirations!

Our Saint taught his children to keep always before their eyes the thought of death, that in their labors they might be always animated with fervor of spirit, and might be constant in their trust in the help of God.



ST. CAMILLUS DE LELLIS
BOOK II

CHAPTER ONE

The Need That the World Had of Our Order

I have related in the first book how our holy Father Camillus succeeded, first, in founding his congregation, and, secondly, in establishing it by solemn vows. And now that my readers may see what need the world, and Christendom particularly, had of this institute, and what good reason the Holy See had to look favorably upon it, I will begin this second book with a short account of some of the many grievous scandals which our Saint observed in the hospitals and in private houses, and which induced him to seek a remedy for them in his new order.

To begin with the hospital-sick. Any one can see how much they needed this institution. They were so disliked for their dirt, and so shunned from fear of contagion, that there was no little difficulty in finding even ill-instructed priests who were disposed to take up their residence amongst them. Even the most zealous bishops and the gentlemen who took the greatest pains to support the hospitals, finding it so difficult to procure proper ministers, were obliged, especially in times of pestilence or contagious diseases, to employ ignorant men, or even persons who had been banished for their faults, or were under the ban of the Inquisition, which confined them there for penance and punishment. So that, as they were there only by compulsion, or at best for love of gain, they gave scarcely any relief to the sick.

In fact, the greater part of them died without Confession, without Communion, without Extreme Unction,

and without any one's recommending their souls with the prayers appointed by holy Church, to comfort men in their last conflict. And if now, in the hospitals served by our religious, it sometimes happens, in spite of all watchfulness, that by some sudden and unexpected accident some few die without these aids, what must have been the case when they were served only by mercenaries or those imprisoned? Certain it is, that poor dying people lay whole days and nights in agony, without any one's coming near them to assist them or to speak a word to comfort them.

And then the way in which the Most Holy Sacraments were administered was most indecent; for generally the Most Holy Body of our Lord was carried through the hospitals with only one, or, at most, two little candles and again, there was a most pernicious practice of obliging the sick to confess directly they entered the hospital, though they might be trembling with cold or burnt up with fever; the consequence of which was that, through want of preparation, and through the inconveniences they suffered, they forgot to mention the greatest part of their sins, and died in a most pitiable state. Thus the Majesty of God was often most grievously outraged.

It often happened that, after the sick had received the Sacred Host, it stuck to the roof of their dry and feverish mouth, so that they could not swallow it, and they pulled it away with their own hands, which they then wiped on the counterpane or the sheets, where some particles must have remained. And again, O Eternal God, how often has it happened through want of spiritual persons to assist at this sacred action, that ignorant country people or others have spit Thee out on the ground or against the wall!

It happened to St. Camillus himself, as he was one day assisting at the Communion of the sick in a certain hospital, that one of them coughed violently, and then the sacred particles flew out of his mouth; but the Saint, who was standing close by, was so quick in catching it in his hands that he put it by in a fitting place without even the least fragment falling to the ground.

And then to go on to the abuses which affected the bodies of the sick, who can recount all the improvements caused by our religious continually attending and even living in the hospital! How often for want of any one to hand them their food, have the sick passed whole days fasting, without anything to eat! How many of those who were helplessly ill have, for want of any one to make their beds, rotted in their own filth! How many in getting out of bed for some necessity have fallen on the ground through weakness, and either died there or been picked up seriously injured! How many more have been handled by the nurses with so little charity, and so roughly, that the very assistance that was given them was their death! How many insults and jokes were passed on them for amusement!

And would to God that the cruelty had stopped here, and that they had not, moreover, beaten them with their fists, bound them for no cause at all, and ill-used them in other ways, as though Jesus Christ had not said in His divine Gospel: "That which ye have done to one of these, My brethren, ye have done to Me." How many, burning with unbearable thirst, have not been able to get a cup of water to wash and cool their mouths! And we have for certain that more than one person has been known to become almost mad with thirst and to drink urine, blood, dirty water, or the oil from the lamps; and in the hospital of Milan there was a poor fellow who

drank up, one after the other, five bottles of sirup and two draughts.

It was very hard, not to say cruel, to care so little for quenching the thirst of one's neighbor, as it is perhaps the greatest pain which the sick feel, and one which may be compared to the pains of the damned, as we read about Dives, that, in the midst of his torments, the burning of his tongue pained him more than anything else.

I will add a few other things, which are scarcely credible but, nevertheless, only too true. Many, not yet quite dead, have been dragged from their beds by the mercenary attendants, and been carried, half alive as they were, with dead bodies to be buried. I call on God, who knows that I lie not, to witness what I am about to relate.

In a certain hospital of Italy, which I will not name for various reasons, it happened that Camillus found in the dead-room among the corpses, a man who, by the blood that still flowed from a wound in his forehead, occasioned by the violence with which he had been thrown down among the dead, appeared to be still alive; so he went near and found him in his agony; he helped to take him back to his bed, where he lived three days.

In the same hospital there was a Frenchman dying of apoplexy, and after the assisting priest had read the usual prayers for the commendation of a soul, he thought that he was dead; so he sprinkled him with holy water, recited the proper prayers, covered his face with a napkin, and went away. He was left in this way for some hours, till two servers came with a coffin and torches to take him to be buried. They uncovered his face, and instead of a corpse, they found a man alive and able to speak! Still the shock was so great at seeing before him the bier and those two ministers of death, that he was struck dumb

with terror, and would not either eat or drink; so after five days he died.

A similar case occurred in another hospital. A man had met with a dangerous accident, and being apparently dead, was carried by the servants into the dead-room, where there were eight dead bodies lying. Here he remained four hours on the bare ground and then came to himself, and finding himself in such a horrible place and company, he did really almost die with fright. But gathering his courage, he got up on his feet, and all naked as he was, reappeared among the living in the hospital, who were stunned with wonder at seeing before their eyes, and hearing the voice of, a man whom they thought not only dead but buried. This man survived many years, and I have had the occasion to converse with him.

And now let us pass on to other inconveniences of a different kind: how many infidels of every nation, never hearing conversion or baptism spoken of, have died like beasts! It was not thus after our religious entered the hospitals, for they by God's grace have converted and baptized multitudes; so that our holy Father had reason to say: "My Fathers and brethren, what better Indies, or what better Japan, can our congregation wish for as a field for converting souls to God than our holy hospitals!"

And indeed, who does not know the power of the devout words which fervent assistants whisper into the ears of the dying to strengthen them against the enemy? We will cite but one example out of the many which we could bring forward in proof of this.

In the hospital of the Annunziata, at Naples, one of our religious had labored for the space of more than four days to convert a Turkish slave who was lying there; but the man was obstinate and would answer nothing but: "A Turk I was born, and a Turk I will die." But as

one of the most admirable functions of charity is patience the pious religious ceased not to stay by him and to beseech him to be converted up to the time of his last agony; and precisely at that time, when his case seemed desperate, God in His goodness changed his heart, and he demanded baptism, and very soon after he had received it, while his brows were still bedewed with the saving drops, he passed happily to the Lord full of joy, and with the sweet name of Jesus and Mary on his lips, which a little before he had so abhorred.

What I have already said, short though it be, is enough to give an idea of the deplorable state of the hospitals and of the strong reasons which led Camillus to found his order. The great advantage which the sick and dying reaped from the assistance of Camillus and his companions, and the improved conditions of the hospitals that our Saint only entered or visited for a short time, induced the Supreme Pontiff not only to approve his institute, but also to extol it highly and to enrich it with innumerable privileges.

Sixtus V in the constitution in which he gives his approbation of the order, after remarking that charity to the poor sick, especially those in hospitals, is most pleasing to our Lord, adds: "Now our beloved son, Camillus of Lellis, priest of the diocese of Chieti, and others his companions, considering how pleasing to God and necessary for the salvation of souls this kind of duty is, have in these days shown themselves as affectionate to Christ's poor in the hospitals as a mother could be to her only son; and are daily giving proof of the same, by exhorting some with all becoming kindness and charity to be patient, by admonishing others to receive the sacraments of the Church, and by consoling others in their last moments, and exhorting them day and night to die well."

And a little after, the same Pope adds these remarkable words: "Hoping that in this institute will be found a remedy for the many inconveniences and dangers which the sick often fall into from the want of proper ministers, and that it will provide for the salvation of soul and body and many other blessings for the faithful." He repeats almost the same things in his second bull, granting to the Servants of the Sick the privilege of wearing a cross on their habits.

Gregory XIV. in erecting the institute of St. Camillus into a religious order, from the very beginning of his bull, does nothing but praise Camillus and his congregation. The same thing is found in the bulls of confirmation and of privileges granted by Popes Urban VIII and Paul V, and others which for brevity we omit.

And then the use which the institute of St. Camillus was found to be of to the sick, especially those in the hospitals, is proved by the numbers of hospitals which, during the lifetime of our Saint or after his death, made application for the assistance of the Fathers Servants of the Sick, and the number of houses founded in so many cities of Italy and other countries.

And although, thank God, the hospitals of our day are in a very different state from that in which they were at the time of St. Camillus, both in cleanliness and in assistance, in physicians and in the care of the sick, still for all that, the late Pope Gregory XVI considering how much greater advantages might be expected from the assistance of pious religious, who approach the beds of the poor sick simply from the spirit of charity, without any hope of gain, than could be hoped for from hired priests, did, at the prayer of His Eminence Cardinal Giuseppe

Antonio Sala, protector and president of the hospital of the most holy Saviour, ad Sancta Sanctorum, cause the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars to publish a rescript, by which he introduced into that hospital the Fathers Servants of the Sick, who were to reside as a religious family in the hospital, giving themselves up solely to the spiritual assistance of the sick females, and the prior of the hospital is the superior of the religious family pro tempore, conformably to the orders of the bulls and constitutions published on this subject by the Popes his predecessors: and the Fathers Servants of the Sick, conformably to this rescript, were on the 31st of October, 1836, put in possession of rooms adapted for them over the hospital by his Eminence the president, where, by the mercy of God and the protection of St. Camillus, who had desired but not obtained such a foundation in one of the hospitals of Rome (as will be related in its place), they joyfully exercise their holy ministry to the satisfaction of all and the spiritual advantage of souls.

No less unhappy was the case of the sick in private houses, where they died abandoned and deprived of all spiritual assistance. Some were found by our religious expiring with their concubines by their side. Others had the spirit of revenge so furiously raging in their hearts that they were cursing their children, although it was not on them that they wished to be revenged. Others were so far from invoking the holy names of Jesus and Mary that they were calling upon some woman for whom they had an impure affection. Others, too far gone to speak, were moving their hands as if they were counting money, showing that their fancy was occupied with their traffic and their merchandise. Others, generally the nobility, for want of any one who had courage to tell them of their danger, died without the sacraments. Others were con-

demned to see with their own eyes their heirs quarreling and fighting for their property, stripping the rooms, nailing up boxes, hiding the plate, making inventories, turning everything upside down, and stealing even the quilt from the bed.

The reader may imagine the distress of these wretched men, who, besides the fear of approaching death and judgment, had to endure the quarreling of the heirs, the assassinations of the servants, the lamentations of the wife crouched in a corner, and bemoaning before the time her poverty and her loneliness. Is it not desirable, is it not necessary, in these terrible circumstances to have a good religious to assist and console one in such tribulations?

There was a gentleman dying at Rome, who was encompassed with all these troubles and kept repeating to himself: "Ah, Muzio, Muzio" (this was his name), "to what an end art thou brought!"

We need not recount the numberless superstitious practices which the women of the lower orders used for the dying, chiefly for those who continued over a long time in their agony. Anything, however ridiculous and foolish, that came to hand was used for their silly purposes; and they made even blessed rosaries and relics of saints serve the purposes of their detestable superstitions and sacrilegious greediness.

I may conclude this subject by recording two other equally pernicious abuses which our religious observed; the first is the cruel pity of some relations who choke the poor sick persons with too much food or too much drink — a fatal mistake to fall into, and attended with great risk to the sick person's soul. And where can we find any mistake so pitiable in its consequences? The father through too much love stuffs his child to death, the son kills the

father, the wife the husband, and one brother another. Yet for all this, some women are so stupid that they will not be corrected, and often put things into the mouths of the sick persons they are nursing, to refresh them, and so kill them.

I fell in with a case of this kind when I was in Genoa. A mother who wanted to relieve her son who was dying put her fingers into his mouth to enable him to cough, as she said, and the poor fellow died instantly.

The second abuse is not altogether unlike the former, and is so great that it ought to be altogether put a stop to. It is this, that many women, not unlike those I have mentioned, through a foolish fear lest the corpses of the sick should not look well after death, close their eyes and mouth before they are quite dead, so that it sometimes happens, either that they are smothered to death, or else are buried alive.

And that I may not appear to be relating my dreams, I will put down one fact out of many that has occurred during our days at Rome. Antonio Maria Grillo of Parma was residing in this city — he was subject to fits, which confined him for some time to his house. One day he had such a bad one that he was supposed to be dead; and in the evening he was carried to the church of St. Maria in Monticelli and buried in the vault there. In the morning he came to himself and, supposing that he was in bed in his own house, he began to call his wife Catherine and to tell her to open the window and let out the stink with which the room was full. As Catherine did not answer, he supposed she was asleep; so he put out his hand to wake her, and laying hold of a foot, which he supposed to be hers, but which was really that of a dead woman, he gave it such a pull that it came off in his hand. Then perceiving with horror that he was buried, he cried

out as loud as he could for help; but he would have cried out to no purpose, had it not pleased God that the next day the vault had to be opened again to bury the body of a butcher, and the poor man was found half dead from the horrible stench and fright.

The circumstance was soon spoken of all over Rome, and Pope Clement VIII made a point of seeing the disinterred man, and desired him to recount minutely all the circumstances. Antonio himself told it to me just as he had told it to the Pope, and I have related it here, that future generations may know the evils produced by inexperience in the case of sick and dying persons. Our order has already put a stop to many of these abuses; and Camillus thought that it would put a stop to all of them, if only it might please God to propagate and spread it throughout the whole world.

CHAPTER TWO

Camillus Obtains from Pope Clement VIII a Confirmation of His Order, and also Some Pecuniary Assistance

Camillus, after making his profession, showed himself more fervent than ever in his charity to the sick, saying that he was now bound by his vow to do all that which he had before done by a voluntary impulse of charity.

In the meantime Innocent IX died, on the 30th of December, 1591, and Clement VIII was elected Pope, on the 30th of January, 1592. As Camillus did not know what were the sentiments of this Pope in respect to his order, as he had while a cardinal been opposed to binding it with vows, he thought it right to ascertain.

So he went to kiss his feet and begged him at the same time to confirm the order and its privileges. The Pope consented with the greatest kindness and readiness, and published a brief on the 20th of March in the same year, in which he not only approved and confirmed what had been granted by Gregory XIV, his predecessor, but moreover, gave him faculties to clothe novices without the intervention of a chapter, and although the brief limited these faculties to the term of two years, yet when they had elapsed, he renewed them without any limits in another brief of March 31, 1594.

This was in truth a most precious favor, when we consider that it was granted by a Pope who denied it to all except a very few orders. What a proof does this furnish that the hearts of rulers are in the hand of God! For Clement, who as a cardinal was opposed to binding their congregation with vows, after he was raised to the throne of St. Peter and made the Vicar of Jesus Christ, approved it, confirmed it, and enriched it with great privileges.

The same change took place in Cardinal Cusano, who used to call the infant congregation a sham company, but after it was erected into an order, was never satisfied with extolling the glorious dispositions of Providence; and always regarded our holy Father with the greatest affection. The same thing happened in the case of St. Philip Neri, who went on the Vigil of St. Mary Magdalen to visit Camillus and after a hearty embrace said to him: "Father, really, the success of this work seems to me miraculous and not brought about by human means or wisdom."

And, finally, the same thing occurred in the case of Cardinal San Severino, who was entirely opposed to the first confirmation of the congregation, but afterwards esteemed it so much that in his last illness he would al-

ways have four of our religious about his bed, and expired in their arms.

I must now accompany Camillus in his travels, on which he set out after he had obtained the new brief of confirmation. He first went to Naples, to receive the profession of the religious there, as he had received those at Rome; and this solemn act was performed on the 3d of May, the feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross, 1592.

Thence he proceeded with Curzio Lodi to Bocchianico, his native place, where he distributed to the poor much alms that Fermo Calvi had given him in Rome for this purpose, distributing also various spiritual books and medals and rosaries, and he gave no little edification by going from house to house to find out the poor; and by his quiet patience when one of his rich relatives whom he exhorted to despise wealth and to be more liberal to the poor said of him: "One fool in a family is enough."

From Bocchianico he went to the holy house of Loreto, and in that venerated sanctuary he returned most humble and devout thanks to the most holy Virgin, for the assistance and favor shown to him and his whole order.

Then he returned to his residence in Rome. And here he found that the debt upon his poor house had increas'd to the sum of 9000 scudi. His greatest difficulty arose from the incessant applications of the confraternity of the Gonfalone, which had not received the rent due for the houses contiguous to the church of the Maddalena, where our religious lived; and after waiting many years they at last came with the officers of the vicar to receive securities, and especially to sequester a house that Fermo Calvi had a little while before bought and given to our order. To compound this difficult business he made the best bargain he could with the archconfraternity of the Gon-

alone, agreeing to purchase the houses occupied by the religious.

While the deeds were being prepared, one of the deputies of the archconfraternity, who knew the extreme poverty of the order, and feeling sure that it would never be able to pay the 400 scudi that it still owed, said in a joking way to our Saint: "The rest of the payment, Father, when is it to be made?" Then Camillus, full of confidence in God, answered: "Now is not God able to send, perhaps tomorrow, sacks of money to my door?" The deputies laughed at this and told him that the season of miracles had gone by. But they were soon undeceived to their astonishment, as I shall have to relate in the next chapter.

In the meantime Camillus did not cease to lay before God the poverty of his house; and God inspired him to go humbly to the feet of the Pope and discover to him without reserve its miserable state. So on the feast of St. Francis he went to Frascati, where the Pope was then staying, and prostrating himself on the ground to kiss his feet, he said to him: "Most Holy Father, our order, which is engaged day and night in the service of the poor, is so burdened with debt that we know not what to do. What with rent and taxes, we have to pay for our house in Rome three hundred and seventy scudi a year; we, therefore, beg your Holiness to help us in these our early struggles." The heart of the truly clement Pontiff was too generous not to be moved with compassion at the misery which was unreservedly discovered to him; so he told Camillus that, although the Camera Apostolica was exhausted by the thousands of scudi it had to pay monthly to the emperor, yet directly he returned to Rome, he would remember him. He fulfilled his promise; and ordered that

the three hundred and seventy scudi should be paid yearly out of the papal treasury.

CHAPTER THREE

Camillus Foresees That God Will Assist the Order — Death of Cardinal Mondovi

About the same time that Camillus obtained this assistance, he collected together all his religious in the church, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament (a most unusual thing to do) and fervently recommended them to pray for his Holiness, according to the order which, as he said, had been given him by the Pope. And then in a very unusual way, like a person under the influence of a superior spirit, he reasoned so sublimely upon the providence of God that all fancied that he must have received some divine promise.

"Fathers and brethren" (these words formed the conclusion of his vivid discourse), "let us not doubt for a moment the providence of God; only let us attend to perfection of life and the service of the poor, and if we do this, I promise you (and there can be no doubt of this), that before long, perhaps before a month has passed, we shall experience the assistance of God, and shall see our order delivered from all its debts. Remember the words that this most merciful Master" (pointing to the Blessed Sacrament) "said to the holy virgin Catherine of Siena, 'Catherine, think thou of Me, and I will think of thee.' So we ought to believe for certain, that if we think of Him and His poor, He will think of us and will not leave us destitute of those temporal things with which He has abundantly provided Turks, Jews, and other enemies of His holy faith."

Within a month our Lord fulfilled the hopes and predictions of His servant. Cardinal Mondovi went to a better life and left the order fifteen thousand scudi, to the astonishment of all who heard Camillus talk so confidently about God's providence, because the cardinal was at that time perfectly well; and although in a few days he fell slightly ill and was often visited by Camillus, they thought of anything rather than being so soon his heirs. The only hint ever given was that, when he had made his will and was near dying, he took the hand of Camillus, who never left him, and looking at him more kindly than usual, he seemed to say to him: "Father, I have loved you in life and in death — remember to pray for me."

But Camillus, not penetrating his meaning, was melted into sobs and prayers, imploring God to give him a happy and holy death. And then when he saw him lying dead before him, he gave way to his grief and, like an affectionate son who has lost a kind father, he kissed his cold face and bathed it with his tears.

And while he was so employed, the cardinal's gentlemen came and forced him away, telling him that as he was the heir, it was his duty to see after the funeral. The notary Ponzia Seva opened and read the will, and the kindness of his benefactor opened afresh the grief of Camillus. Now as he had left orders in his will that his funeral should be conducted without any kind of pomp, Camillus immediately sent some persons to the Pope to beseech him to dispense with this disposition and to allow him to honor the departed cardinal with a funeral commensurate with his worth. He obtained the permission and had him carried with great solemnity to the church of St. Clemente, of which he was titular, to be

buried there; and Camillus with some of his religious followed his bier through the street.

As soon as the gentlemen of the Gonfalone heard the news, they had presented to him, as he was following the funeral, a paper written in letters of gold, admitting him to partake of their privileges, intending to remind him of his debts to them. Camillus received it and said: "Thank God, it is a time of miracles, though those gentlemen could not believe it or imagine it." In a little time he paid them all he owed; he settled all the home-debts and added a great many convenient buildings to the house itself.

The death of this pious cardinal, our protector, took place on the 17th of December, 1592, and although the bull containing the erection of the order commanded otherwise, yet Camillus, knowing that the tender plan could not stand without support of some illustrious personage to assist it with money and defend it by his patronage, thought it best to apply to the Pope for a second protector; and he assigned Cardinal Salviati, his old benefactor.

CHAPTER FOUR

*Camillus Goes to Found a House in Milan and in Genoa
— He Threatens the Vengeance of God upon
Some Dissolute Sailors — The Accom-
plishment of His Denunciations*

Our order had at this time no other houses than those of Rome and Naples. But as every day fresh persons came to demand the habit, Camillus thought that it was the will of God that he should found other houses in other cities of Italy.

And as his only object was to perform every act of charity to his neighbors and to succor the sick, whether in the hospitals or in private houses, he sought not the favors of the great nor letters of recommendation, but putting his trust in God and in the usefulness and excellence of the institute to smooth his way for him, he sent before him some of his religious on the road to Milan, and following not far behind them, he entered that city on the 4th of June, 1594. He remained there only long enough to set the affair going and then departed for Genoa, where he arrived on the 15th of the following August.

In both these cities our religious were accommodated in hired houses and sallied forth every day to visit the hospitals and to assist the dying, as they did at Rome and Naples. Such was the commencement of these two foundations, which soon became so popular that the people, the nobles, and the archbishops themselves contended for the honor of supporting and enlarging them.

Camillus was then called to Naples on urgent business, and making choice of the galley commanded by Cosimò Centurione, he embarked. During the voyage an event occurred which showed clearly his horror of sin, and for that reason I think right to mention it.

The fleet was obliged to take refuge for a time in Porto Venere; now in Camillus's ship there were some young sailors who had no fear of God and were not ashamed to behave in an indecent way to a Spanish girl in his presence. Camillus was pierced to the heart with sorrow at the injury he saw done to God, and unable to endure such barefaced impudence, he jumped up and, raising on high his crucifix, rebuked them with such zeal and with such a voice that every one on board was amazed and astonished. He, moreover, threatened them with the

tremendous judgments of God, unless they repented and left off that abominable sin, and he wound up his discourse with the following words: "Indeed, I am astonished that the Lord has such patience with you and does not shoot out His arrows from heaven to destroy you or swallow you up in the sea; but know this, that one day these things shall come upon you and upon this whole galley, especially if you do not repent of this abominable sin."

And oh, the fearful judgments of God! These threats, pronounced by Camillus on the 20th of August, were proved by the event, for as the same galley was sailing the year after to conduct to Spain the Count della Miranda, viceroy of Naples, it was wrecked in the gulf of Lyons, and all those dissolute young men were drowned, together with all the young women in the train of the vice-queen.

This fearful accomplishment of his prediction was told to Camillus during another voyage by a pious old sailor, who had heard his rebukes and denunciations of those unhappy young men. "Father," said he, all those young men that you rebuked last year in Porto Venere have perished with their ship, as you predicted; not one of them was saved, and they had all continued in their course of vice."

Camillus reached Naples this time in very bad health, occasioned chiefly by his having remained twelve days together in the open air, as he had stationed himself on a cannon in the forepart of the vessel and could not be by any means induced to return to the cabin, which he had left because of a curse that he had heard a gambler who was losing utter there.

After he had dispatched the business that had brought him to Naples, he went on board one of Prince Doria's galleys, which were sailing for Genoa, and arrived there,

after weathering a dangerous storm, with the intention of resting there awhile. But hearing some report of a pestilence in Milan, and that the archbishop had called upon two of our religious to take charge of an infected family in the lazaretto, he was impelled by his charity, and by fear lest he should be stopped and lose the opportunity of exposing himself to that peril, to set out immediately and to journey with the greatest haste to that city. There he found that the two religious were already shut up in the lazaretto to take care of the infected family; and although a member of this family died of the plague in their arms, yet Camillus had the happiness of seeing them come forth from their confinement safe and sound.

CHAPTER FIVE

*The Pope Sends Some of Our Religious into Hungary —
He Gives the Care of the Sick of the Borgo to
Camillus — A House Founded in Bologna*

In the next year, 1595, Pope Clement sent some Italian troops into Hungary to recover Strigonia, and thought proper to supply them with some of our religious to take care of the sick and dying soldiers, besides their other clergy.

As soon as he had made his desire known to Camillus, he immediately chose eight of his religious for this holy mission, and reflecting on the importance of performing perfectly this business entrusted to the order by the Pope, he accompanied them in person as far as Trent, in order to be able to instruct them fully by the way on what they had to do. He advised them to abstain from all intercourse with the heretics, to live in peace and concord

with one another, and to edify their neighbors by their good example; he gave them other suitable instructions in writing, and then embraced them all one by one, and so took his leave.

They fulfilled their task with the greatest possible advantage to the sick, wounded, and dying soldiers. Not content with administering the Sacraments to them and recommending their souls, they also did everything they could for them in the hospitals of Vienna, Comarc, Ala, Possonia, and in the tents under the walls of Strigonia, in the boats and in the wagons during the march, exposed to the wind, the cold, and the rain, with a diligence and attention always increasing in proportion to the distress of those who were suffering.

After Strigonia was taken and the army was disbanded, they all returned safe into Italy, except Brother Annibale Montaggioli of Padua, who was overcome by fatigue and suffering, and died in a wagon on the way between Castle Nuovo and Possonia, and was buried by the wagoner in the plain near the Danube, and a little cross of wood put at his head.

This good brother was naturally so inclined to works of charity that, while he was still in the world following the profession of a soldier, seeing one day a beggar who was suffering very much from the cold for want of something to cover his head, he took off his own hat and cut it in two with his sword, like St. Martin, and keeping one half for himself gave the other to the poor man — and afterwards endured most patiently the jokes of his companions about his mutilated hat.

In this expedition a thing took place, which ought to encourage our religious to fear no danger when they are called on to assist the dying. In the assault of the city of Strigonia, Colonel Paluzzo of Forli was struck on the

head by a great stone; and while he was in his agony under the wall, one of our Fathers came up to comfort and assist him in his last moments. All this time a tempest of stones was falling all about the place where the dying man was lying. And yet, as a soldier, named Claudio, who saw the circumstance, told me, the pious religious was never once struck, and was able to conclude his charitable office without the least injury.

The next year, 1596, was most unhappy for Rome. where, during the months of July and August, a disease was prevalent, which, in the mortality which it caused, was scarcely to be distinguished from a pestilence. The Pope, with the wisest foresight, ordered each Cardinal to take care of the sick in his own parish, and reserved to himself all those in the Borgo Sant' Angelo and its suburbs, and these he entrusted to the care of Camillus, who was universally revered as the father of the poor. He embraced with readiness and courage this new occasion of exercising his ever-burning charity, and choosing ten other laborers to assist him, he put his sickle to that holy harvest. And as order is the first and most necessary condition for the good management of affairs, they distributed their ministrations on the following plan.

Two of them always accompanied the physician to put down what he ordered for each sick person. Two went about to assist the dying in their passage to another life. All the others went every morning and evening, with eight porters behind them, dispensing from door to door whatever was necessary for the sick. The food was prepared in a house assigned to them for that purpose by the Pope, who also liberally supplied them with everything they wanted.

Camillus and his companions were occupied two whole months in this labor, visiting daily the houses of the Bor-

go, the vineyards outside of the Porta Angelica, and going as far as St. Lazzaro, the cross on Monte Mario, and the Valle dell' Inferno, and all the vaults, in spite of the heat of the weather, to the great consolation of the sick, the satisfaction of the Pope, and the edification of the people.

It might seem incredible that not one of them, and not one of the many religious who were in the house of the Maddalena, was attacked by the disease, though it was nearly universal, and though they were engaged night and day in assisting the worst cases; but it has been observed by our Fathers, and above all by Camillus, that the Lord has always preserved our religious in perfect health in the midst of the most contagious diseases, in order that they might have more strength and spirits to assist their neighbors. Camillus often extolled this providential care to his children, chiefly when he saw them wearied out and almost falling asleep on the road: and he declared, 'that the true apostolic life consisted in giving oneself no repose or rest, for the love of God and the salvation of souls;' and, oh, how often might he have rejoiced in seeing this painful life courageously borne by more than one of his fervent children! I will relate only one example.

One of our priests had, during the time of the pestilence, been up many nights together, without any sleep, assisting first one dying man and then another. He was again called to perform the same office, but nature was unable to endure any longer; he was overcome by so deep a sleep that he put on his shoes and clothes and walked a considerable distance, all in his sleep. And he might have gone on so, had he not fallen in with the sheriff and his officers, who, seeing him reeling and nearly falling down at every step, stopped him and so woke him, and the

good Father was not a little surprised at finding himself in such company. Such was the weariness of our religious in those laborious times.

Near the end of this year, 1596, Camillus, no longer able to resist the continual requests of Cardinal Paleotto and of the Cavaliere Camillo Gozzadini, ambassador of Bologna, sent Father Giovanni Califano to found a house there; he arrived on the 5th of December, and in the following month received possession of the church of St. Colombano.

CHAPTER SIX

Pestilence in Piedmont — Readiness of Camillus and His Religious to Go There — Houses Founded in Florence, Ferrara, Messina, and Palermo

While our second general chapter was being held in May, 1599, news came to Rome that Piedmont was being devastated by a great pestilence, and the king, wishing to provide assistance for his subjects, had ordered his ambassador at Rome to beg the Pope to send immediately a number of our religious. The wishes of the Pope and of the king were told to Camillus by Monsignor Tarugi, then Archbishop of Pisa. The joy which the whole order felt at hearing this request proves how vigorous the spirit of their vocation was.

Many letters and memorials were sent to the chapter from absent religious, many were presented by others who knelt down in person at the feet of our Saint. All were full of the most ardent expressions of their desire to sacrifice their life in the service of the plague-stricken and to merit that death, so much like martyrdom. Camillus himself protested that he would lead them in person.

The Pope was most edified by this readiness, and thanked God for having provided His Church with a new order of ministers, so generous and bold, that they contended for the honor of exposing themselves to death. Everything was prepared, and fifteen of our religious, priests and lay brothers, expected with impatience the day of their departure, when the king, through his ambassador, withdrew his request, both because the contagion was gradually disappearing, and because Henry IV of France had sent a powerful army against him, to make good his pretensions to the Marchesato di Saluzzo; so our religious were obliged to be contented with having consecrated to God their ardent wishes.

The war thus begun by the king of France was pacified by the prudence and policy of Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandino, nephew of the Pope. By this time the fame of our new order was spread through all the provinces of Italy and beyond Italy; and letters came to Camillus from different cities and from Spain, begging him to send some of his religious to found houses there and give them the benefit of his most useful institute. The same petition was made to him by the Cardinal di Giojosa for the kingdom of France, and particularly for Toulouse, his Archiepiscopal See.

Camillus, wishing to satisfy as many of these demands as he could, sent first, in October, 1599, Father Antonio Barra to Florence, where Signor Ridolpho Bardi, with the permission of the Cardinal Archbishop dei Medici (afterwards Pope Leo XI) gave to our order the church and convent of St. Gregorio.

In the same month, at the request of Count Ercole Bevilaqua, he sent Father Pietro Barbarossa to Ferrara, where the Bishop Monsignor Fontana assigned him a lodging within the hospital of St. Anna, till he and his

companions were provided with a church and a house. The following December Father Antonio Niglio set out for Messina; and in June, 1600, Father Giovanni Alvina set out for Palermo. These two cities contributed many thousand scudi to build the necessary houses.

Others also went into Spain and France, but various circumstances prevented them from accomplishing anything, so they were recalled, and it was resolved not to do anything beyond the Alps until the order had extended and taken deep root in Italy, the country of its birth.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Pestilence in Nola, and Death of Five of Our Priests, Who Were Sent to Assist the Sick There

As God had not required the sacrifice of those victims whom the order had selected to manifest its charity towards the pestilence-stricken in Piedmont, another occasion was soon presented to it for offering some of its sons to be consumed on the altar of suffering and zeal. The stagnant waters around the city of Nola were the occasion of a mortality in which the greater part of its inhabitants died. The deaths by themselves were indeed lamentable; but how much more so, considering that the miserable people were deprived of the sacraments, from the priests being either dead, or sick, or having run away.

It was August, 1600, when the Viceroy of Naples begged the assistance of our religious. Seven priests immediately offered themselves for the task. Their hearts sank within them at the sight of the desolate city, so like the portrait of ancient Jerusalem, traced by the mournful hand of Jeremias. Every door and window was shut, the streets were deserted, the churches empty, the bells silent,

or they only tolled mournfully and sullenly for the dead, and the few inhabitants that had escaped were all yellow and more like corpses than living men. The laborers immediately began their work, confessing, giving the Viaticum and Extreme Unction. And as there were no other ecclesiastics, they also conducted the dead bodies to the grave. More than once they were obliged to carry the Blessed Sacrament without lights, without bell, without the canopy, without ecclesiastics or any one to accompany them; and then, out of reverence, instead of the canopy, they always carried an umbrella. They hung around their necks the vessel containing the holy oil, and it often happened that when one of the Fathers came to the house of a sick man, he, by himself, confessed him, communicated him, gave him Extreme Unction, recommended his soul, and, at last, helped to put him outside the door, that when the dead-cart passed by, he might be taken and buried.

They said Masses for those who were well; they baptized many children; they married some who were dying, with their concubines lying in the same bed with them; and more than once they found some sick people lying with a corpse by their side, that had been dead four or even eight days, so that they were nearly dead with the intolerable stench.

All these and other like offices of charity were performed day and night by our priests, who went about in the suffocating heat of August, searching for the sick from house to house. And their care was not confined to their souls. As the city of Naples had furnished them with a thousand ducats to assist them, they procured food and other proper things, and went about giving them away with discretion and prudence.

Camillus had just returned from Genoa to Naples, and although he was wearied with his voyage and still suffered from the effects of the sea, he determined to proceed to this field, where there was such a harvest of sufferings and of merits to be reaped. The superior of the house, the doctor, and many of our religious vainly endeavored to dissuade him, going so far as to tell him that he could not in conscience expose himself to such a certain risk of death: but everything must give way to his unconquerable charity; he would go at any cost, at least to console his religious.

And so he went there with Curzio and Father Sanzio Cicatelli, the writer of this Life. The first thing he did was to obtain the pardon of a poor fellow who was condemned by the government to close imprisonment for refusing to help our religious to bury some dead people. On entering the infected city, he was overcome by the sight of a poor man who was too weak to stand and kept falling to the ground, and other like things which happened in the public streets.

Yet an occasional gleam of joy came across him when he saw his religious so happy in spite of the death that hung over them, and which, indeed, soon overtook them: for wearied out with their labors, sickened with the stench, and infected with the pestilential air, they all fell ill together and were carried to Naples, where, in a few days, five of them died, namely Tommaso Trona, of Piedmont; Matteo di Marco, of Bologna; Cesare Vici, of Fano; Matteo Laurina and Francesco Vitellino, both of Naples.

Their death was a subject rather of envy than of pity to their companions, such was the patience and fortitude which they showed, exhorting one another to die willingly, and enlarging on the happiness of being able to consecrate their lives to God for the salvation of souls.

Father Cesare Vici, immediately after receiving Extreme Unction, seemed to have a foretaste of the glory of heaven and began singing most sweetly, alleluia, alleluia; and as he was a very good musician, Camillus, to comfort him in his torments, ordered a violincello to be given him; he accompanied his songs of praise on this instrument, and, like a tuneful swan, passed happily to his Lord.

Camillus never left these sick Fathers. He served them all as infirmarian, he gave them all their food, he watched them all, and, at last, recommended their souls, and closed their eyes with his own hands. Before they died, the fame of their virtue had come to Rome, and Cardinal Baronius informed Pope Clement of it, who, to show his esteem for them, gave them his benediction and a plenary indulgence in form of the Jubilee of the Holy Year, which was then being celebrated in Rome. Their bodies are buried in our church of Santa Maria Porta Cœli; and we have reason to believe that their souls are enjoying the glory which they gained as brave champions of Jesus Christ and invincible soldiers of His cross.

The above-mentioned pestilence occurred at Nola, while its pastor was sojourning in Rome. Owing to indisposition or some other reason, the bishop was prevented from returning to his diocese, but hearing of the kindness of our Fathers to his flock, and being informed by Camillus of their urgent necessities, he sent him the following letter in reply:

“Most Reverend and Esteemed Father,

“I could not read your Reverence’s letter, in which you described the miseries in my city of Nola and its suburbs, without shedding abundant tears. These accounts have afflicted, and continue to afflict me so deeply that I may say that they have almost deprived me of strength and energy. I can but pray to our Lord and the patron saints

of my city, to restore health to its inmates, to take pity on us, and to obtain pardon for our sins. I have used all diligence to obtain priests and others from this city to send to Nola, but up to this time I have been unsuccessful. I heartily thank your Reverence for the charitable assistance which I learn from my agent, Abbate Melchiorre, you and your Fathers have afforded to the poor sick in my city and its suburbs, and for your having at the simple expression of my wish, not only sent so many priests, but yourself joined them in this holy work. I have been much indebted to your order for the assistance you afforded me in a similar necessity in 1594, but my obligations to you are now so greatly increased that anything I can do will be little to express the depth of my esteem for you and your religious. I have also heard that the Abbate Melchiorre (who is acting as my vicar) is sick and unable to provide for the current necessities. I therefore, by this letter, convey to your Reverend Paternity my authority appertaining to the office of vicar, enabling you to give faculties to confessors to assume authority over the priests and all others subject to me, and the same power to chastise the disobedient, as I myself possess. I further desire you to take from my residence whatever is necessary for the accommodation of your subjects; and in case of your being unable to find what is requisite, I wish you to obtain money from my agent to meet your needs. Recommending to you with heart-felt earnestness these souls, I pray to God to bestow on you His blessing and eternal life.

“Your Reverence’s most affectionate servant,

“Fabrizio, Bishop of Nola.

“Rome, August 19, 1600.”

CHAPTER EIGHT

*Faculties Given to Camillus by the Bishop of Nola
Another Bull in Favor of the Order — A House Founded
at Mantua — Some of Our Religious Sent to
Canizza*

From the year 1595 various difficulties and doubts had arisen respecting the Bull for the foundation of the order published by Gregory XIV, both as regards the service of the sick in the hospitals, the government of the order, and the vow of poverty; and although at different times two general chapters had been held to clear up the doubts, the affair still remained undecided.

Camillus and his advisers, desirous of removing every cause of doubt and dispute, applied to Pope Clement for another Bull, to explain and terminate all the questions which kept the order in this hurtful state of agitation. His Holiness, who was a great friend of our order, immediately complied with this request, and deputed Monsignor Antonio Seneca, afterwards Bishop of Anagni, to examine the matter. He then, after many consultations with Camillus and his advisers, with the counsel and approval of Cardinal Salviati, the protector of the order, and Cardinal Baronius, who were appointed by the Pope, made various statutes, some of them altogether new, others only explanatory of the first Bull, and presented them to the Pope, who, by a "motu proprio", approved and confirmed them.

Among other things it was ordered that with respect to poverty, the order might possess fixed property for the maintenance of novitiates and general infirmaries. But the professed houses were obliged to maintain strictly the vow of poverty. With respect to the government of the order,

the perpetuity of officers was abolished, and the general and advisers were to be elected every six years, except Father Camillus, who, as founder, was to remain in office during his life. With respect to the institute it was decreed that where it could conveniently be done, according to the constitutions of the order, the sick in the hospitals should be assisted in the way that Camillus wished, by religious dwelling continually in them: but where this could not be done, they were to make up by their frequent visits, in which visits the virtue of the institute was declared to lie. All these things may be read in the Bull dated December 28, 1600.

The doubts being thus set at rest, Camillus exerted himself more than ever to extend his order, receiving many novices, and accepting the care of many hospitals. But as it would be too long to relate all his travels and his labors in his new hospitals, I will mention only that in the end of May, 1601, at the request of Vincenzo IV, Duke of Mantua, conveyed to him by Francesco Gonzaga, bishop of the city, he sent there F. Francesco Amadio. The duke received him most kindly and gave him the house and church of St. Tommaso, including the care of the hospital.

After this Pope Clement and Ferdinand, Grand-duke of Tuscany, resolved to send some Italian troops to recover Canizza, a place of great importance in Croatia, which shortly before had been taken by the Turks. The two princes asked Camillus for some of our religious to take care of the sick and dying soldiers. Eight were given to the Pope and five to the Grand-duke, and both parties fulfilled perfectly their appointed task, laboring without rest and undergoing such fatigues that one Father of each party died. The rest had some most providential escapes, which I will here record.

Two large pieces of artillery and three smaller cannons were brought to bear upon the tent where they lived, under Canizza. A ball of forty pounds weight passed between three of them who were sitting close together without doing them the least injury. However, it struck a chest of clothes, which it set on fire, and everything was burned except the cross which was sewed on one of our cloaks.

The news of this was soon spread, the cross passed from hand to hand, and one of the chief officers greatly desired to have it to wear on his breast, as the best breastplate in the world. Another ball of the same weight hit the pole of the tent, from which it bounded off and broke a wooden seat which Father Picuro had that instant left, after sitting there to hear the confession of a soldier. While the soldier was kneeling before him, the drum sounded, and he was obliged to be dismissed quickly to go to the assault of the place, which was just beginning. If they had waited a little longer, they must have been both knocked to pieces.

The same ball, before it hit the tent-pole, had carried off the head of the druggist of the camp, who was walking with one of our brothers before the tent-door, and the brother would have been killed, had he not been walking on the left side. These three merciful deliverances are here recorded, in order to give confidence to any of our religious who may hereafter be employed in similar service.

But to return to our indefatigable Camillus. This same year, in the beginning of July, he undertook the care of the hospital of St. Maria Nuova, in Florence.

Thence he crossed into Sicily, escorted by five Spanish galleys, and founded the house at Palermo, where he made a very different appearance from what he had made there when in his military days he gambled away all that he had. The people and the Viceroy, the Duke of Maqueda, united

to honor him, the latter always conversed with him standing, and with his head uncovered; and to show the esteem he had for him, he condescended to lay the first stone of our church of St. Ninfa, after it had been blessed and consecrated by the Archbishop D. Diego d' Aedo.

From Palermo he sailed to Messina and was received by that city, which, since the time of St. Francis di Paola, had never been honored by the presence of a founder of an order, with such marks of esteem, that there was quite a contention to do him reverence; and happy did he think himself, who could get to kiss his hand and receive his blessing.

Before taking leave of Sicily, I must relate a remarkable circumstance connected with the church of St. Ninfa at Palermo. Owing to some mistake in the measurement, the church was so built that after a few years, when they came to form the Strada Macheda in which it stands, the pavement of the church was found to be at least sixteen feet higher than the street. It was, therefore, necessary to alter it, and hence the vaults had to be changed and the bodies of our religious taken out. Their remains, with clothes, were found to be completely decomposed and reduced to dust; not so the crosses that were sewed on their habits: these were found quite uninjured, and multitudes came to have ocular demonstration of the wonderful fact. There were ten corpses, the latest of which had been buried five years. Thus the same cross which the cannon ball had respected at Canizza, at Palermo, received homage from worms and corruption.

CHAPTER NINE

Dangers of Camillus in Two Storms at Sea — Five More Houses Founded

Camillus returned to Rome and celebrated the third general chapter on the 15th of April, 1602, and the next day he had to assist at the death of the Cardinal-protector Salviati. On the 2d of June he accepted the hospital of St. Anna in Ferrara. From Rome he went to Naples, and from Naples he set sail with some others of his order for Genoa, in a vessel belonging to that Republic; the voyage was one of great danger.

The vessel in which Camillus was, shipped so much water that all the passengers gave themselves up for lost, and cried out: "Mercy, mercy!" Among them were the Marquis and Marchioness Imperiali, the latter of whom, seeing no hope of escape, threw herself down on her knees before Camillus and begged him to pray for their safety. Camillus told her to have recourse to God, not to a sinner like himself, who was unworthy of being heard. Upon this the lady and the rest of the passengers begged him more earnestly to say at least five Paters and five Aves to the wounds of Jesus Christ. As soon as Camillus heard those sacred wounds, to which he had a great devotion, mentioned, he bethought himself that any sinner, however great, might have a hearty confidence in them, and he readily went down to the captain's cabin to comply with the request. The instant he knelt down there, the storm ceased, and all the terror of the passengers was changed into wonder and joy.

When Camillus came up again, they were near worshipping him as a saint; all the passengers stood round him

with an affection mingled with veneration and told him how the wind had ceased and the tempest calmed directly he had gone down to pray. Camillus, full of modest confusion, answered that it was not himself, a sinner who deserved to be swallowed up in the sea a thousand times over, but their faith which had obtained the grace. But however much his humility disclaimed it, the opinion remained that it was his prayers that had obtained the sudden calm; so that a young nobleman and another passenger were converted and demanded the habit, wishing to follow him all the rest of their life as sons and subjects. Camillus granted their request: the first was Paolo Grimaldi, son of the Duke of Eboli, who died a professed in Rome; the second was Damiano Corso, who died a novice in Milan.

In the year 1603 he went at the request of the municipality and of Bishop Matteucci, to found a house in Viterbo, to which was annexed the care of the hospital.

On the 26th of August, in the same year, he set sail with some professed Fathers and novices from Messina to Naples, and again availed himself of the Genoese fleet which happened to be sailing that way.

This voyage was quite as dangerous as the former one; and Camillus declared that he had never seen a more frightful storm, happening as it did in the darkness of night. Close to Capri there arose suddenly a furious wind with rain and hail and such frequent flashes of lightning that the world seemed coming to an end. Many men were blown off the deck into the sea. The gun was fired to give notice that every man must save himself as best he could; all the convicts were trying to release themselves from their fetters; the captain and his mates encircled Camillus and with tears in their eyes begged him to have pity on them and to deliver them by his prayers from their impending death.

Camillus looked at them with a calm and joyful countenance: "Fear not," said he, "it shall be so. Do not be unhappy — come below to pray." They obeyed at once and went down into the captain's cabin; Camillus first of all made the captain and some others cut off their long hair in token of penance, to appease God's anger; this they did willingly. Then Camillus said: "Kneel down here with me, and let us pray." After reciting the Litanies aloud, he continued in silence, with joined hands and eyes turned up to heaven, to beseech God's mercy. And while he was in this position, some of those who had remained on deck came down, crying out joyfully: "A miracle, a miracle, the danger is over, and the prayer of the servant of God has saved our lives!" Every one then threw himself at the feet of Camillus and insisted upon kissing his hands and his clothes.

At daybreak they anchored at Naples, and there Camillus celebrated Mass and communicated all the rest whom he had brought with him, saying to them: "Let us give thanks to the Lord, for He delivered us last night by a miracle."

Then when he remembered how the crew must have labored, he was moved with compassion for the wretched beings, Christians and infidels, and immediately ordered that our house should send each of them (and there were more than three hundred) two loaves, a bottle of wine, half a pound of meat with broth, and fruit.

Camillus remained some time in Naples; and in the beginning of the year 1604 he undertook the management of three hospitals, that of the Annunziata, of the Incurables, and of St. Giacomo degli Spagnuoli. The almost incredible labors which he went through in all these places at last overcame his strength, and he became very ill and

weak, so that he began to think of resigning his office of general.

At this time, March 4, 1605, Pope Clement VIII died, and on the 25th of April was succeeded by Leo XI, who was elected on the 2d of the same month; he died on the 16th of May, in the same year, and Cardinal Camillo Borghese, of Rome, succeeded to the Chair of St. Peter, under the name of Paul V.

In the month of June, this year, Camillus founded two new houses. One in his native place, Bocchianico; the other at Chieti, to which was attached the care of the hospital.

In November, 1606, at the request of Count Alessandro Sforza, he founded another house in the Borgo Nuovo. In the year 1607 he accepted the care of the great hospital of Genoa, having in the previous year accepted the spiritual care of the Incurables of that city.

A little after, at the request of the municipality of Caltagirone in Sicily, he sent Father Francesco Antonio Niglio, to open a house there. And he used every exertion to obtain the hospitals of Rome, Palermo, Messina, and many other cities, but they were refused by the governors, who declared that they were quite satisfied with their being visited.

When the order was extended into so many places and had the care of so many hospitals, the good Father had to encounter many difficulties. The first arose from the weakness of the order which was unequal to such a burden.

The second from the jealousy of the governors and ministers of some of the hospitals, who did not like us to be in possession of them and made us as uncomfortable as they could, to force us to leave them. It came to this in the hospitals of St. Maria Nuova of Florence, the Annunziata at Naples, and the Incurables at Genoa.

But the third and greatest difficulty, which often reduced our holy Father to the greatest distress, arose from the mortality and sickness of our religious, occasioned by overfatigue.

The fourth difficulty was, that the good Father, resolved at all hazards to fulfil the obligations imposed upon him, was obliged to admit many laborers, for whose maintenance the ordinary revenues contributed by the charity of the people were not sufficient, and he was therefore forced to burden the order with great debts.

CHAPTER TEN

Camillus is Many Times Providentially Assisted in His Extreme Want

We may easily conceive then that Camillus's charity reduced him to great necessity. But the providence of God was not slack to provide succor. We will give some instances of these gracious interpositions.

When the order was first established, the afflicted Father once found himself so poor and ill provided that he had not enough to buy food for the religious. Now although he had a bill of exchange on the Roman people for two hundred and fifty scudi, and had gone more than once to the bank of the Altoviti to get it cashed, he was always told that the Roman people had no longer any effects at the bank. In his distress he had recourse to his unfailing resource, the crucifix. When he went out the next morning, he met in the street Cesare Zattera, the cashier of Agostino Pinelli, who, without taking a single thought whether or not the Roman people had any effects at the bank, cashed the bill immediately.

In another distress he had recourse to the same Saviour, and was again heard; for an uncle of Brother Paolo Cherubino, a professed religious, died, and left to his nephew, who did not expect anything, more than a thousand gold crowns in ready money, which Brother Paolo made over to F. Camillus, who used them to supply the extreme necessity in which the house was involved.

In June, 1605, when he was in the professed house at Naples, where there were at least a hundred religious, the Father Minister came to him one morning near dinner time and told him that there was not enough bread, and that the baker resolutely refused to supply any more till his account was paid, and asked him whether nevertheless the bell should be rung for dinner. Camillus answered: "I have no more money, my purse is at the feet of the crucifix: go and pray, and fear not, for the Lord will not let His servants die of hunger." The Father Minister was astonished at this reply and went to the superintendent of the refectory, and after repeating the very words of Camillus, added: "He is a saint, let us obey and go and pray before the most Holy Sacrament."

They had not been long praying before a loud peal was heard at the gate bell: it was one of the Countess of Benevento's gentlemen who stood there, with a carriage covered with a velvet pall, full of the best white bread, guarded by two halberdins; besides this, she sent a bill of exchange for two hundred ducats directed to the Father Founder, begging him to pray for her husband, the viceroy, and her sons. They were all astonished, and all thanked God for His mercy. Camillus ordered that as this bread was a peculiar gift of Providence, portions of it should be sent to the Fathers and brethren who were in the hospitals and in the novitiate.

The alms-collector of the house of Rome, whose name was Francesco Lapis of Florence, put into the hands of Camillus a parcel containing a hundred gold crowns. Camillus, surprised at such a munificent gift, inquired the name of the donor, and was told that it was Signor Camillo Rinuccini, who had been told by the collector that the house was in great want.

Camillus feared there was some mistake, as that gentleman did not usually give such a sum every month; and he was, moreover, displeased that, by adding the word "great" to "want", the collector had misrepresented the case, so he thought he could not retain the money with a good conscience: "Go, therefore," said he, "directly, and restore this parcel to Signor Camillo, and tell him that we are really in want, but not in great want."

The collector obeyed; but oh, how astonished was Rinuccini at seeing a sum that he had not given restored to him, for he was quite positive that the parcel contained only two scudi in copper and silver, which he had received from a tenant of his and had put by to give to us. He, therefore, sent back the parcel, begging Camillus by all means to accept it for love of him, fully persuaded in his own mind that God, whose power alone can change silver and copper into gold, had changed the money in the hands of Camillus. This was often told as a miracle both by the gentleman and his wife, and was well known in his family.

But as all the sudden aids that I have hitherto related, as well as many others which I must omit on account of their similarity, were brought about by the ministration of men, I must conclude this chapter by relating one where God used the ministry of an angel.

In November, 1606, Camillus was obliged to relinquish the hospital of St. Maria Nuova, in Florence, where more than thirty of his religious resided. He could not

find room for this number in his house, neither could he obtain money to pay for their journey to another city. He was talking of this difficulty before some of his intimate friends, among whom was Cristoforo Ottonajo, the physician; and as there was a crucifix in the room, he interrupted his discourse with men, to turn his countenance to that most holy image, and he exclaimed with a sigh: "O Lord, Thou canst have mercy on this poor family!"

He had no sooner spoken these words than the bell rang, and an unknown man made his appearance, who took Camillus aside and said to him: "Father, are you in want of money?" Camillus answered: "Blessed be God, I am in the greatest possible distress." "How much do you want?" said the stranger. "I want three hundred scudi." "Well, then, wait a minute, and I will return."

With these words he went out and immediately returned with a bag, out of which he counted the three hundred scudi and said, "Take the money and use it." He then knelt down at Camillus's feet and begged his dismissal, and so departed. Camillus was altogether overcome by the goodness of God, threw himself down on the ground, and gave Him most humble thanks for having sent His angel to deliver him from the miserable situation in which he was.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Camillus Resigns the Office of General

Camillus having found by experience that the new bull which he had so much desired was not of so great practical use as he had anticipated, and having seen with his own eyes that there were insurmountable difficulties increasing every day in the way of his attaining what he desired, con-

tented himself with having offered to God his good intentions, and determined to retire from all business and resign the office of general, so as to end his days in peace.

He conceived this thought during his illness in Naples, which we have mentioned before. He first of all told it to his intimate friend F. Ferdinando di St. Maria, the barefooted Carmelite of that city. Then in Rome he talked over the matter with F. Bartolomeo Ricci, the Jesuit, with F. Fra Sante, guardian of the Capuchins, with Msgr. Antonio Seneca, and, lastly, with Cardinal Ginnasi, whom the Pope had appointed the year before to be protector of the order.

We may easily suppose that these various persons gave various answers, some advising the step, others dissuading him from it. To quiet his conscience in this variety of opinions, he went twice to the Pope to receive his decision. The Pope referred him to the cardinal-protector, who, regarding simply the repose of Camillus, thought that, old and ill as he was, his resignation should be received. But reflecting that so important an event should not take place without due solemnity and that it was necessary to take steps to provide a successor, he determined to convoke a diet and to summon to Rome all the provincials of the order.

They met in Rome on the 2d of October, 1607, and Camillus, kneeling before the cardinal-protector, resigned the office of general, declaring that he at the same time gave up any privilege or prerogative that might belong to him as founder, as he had resolved to spend the rest of his days in holy obedience. The cardinal commended the humility of Camillus, but declared that it was his wish that he should receive the honor due to the Father of the order and to his great virtue. Camillus nevertheless adhered firmly to his purpose and began that very evening to give a

bright example of humility, sitting in the refectory with the other subjects at the priests' common table — a sight which drew tears from the eyes of many of them.

The next morning he caused all who were in the house to be assembled and told them of his resignation, exhorting them to perfect obedience to the person whom God should appoint as his successor.

He wrote many letters of the same purport to the various houses, one of which, directed to the house at Florence, is as follows: "Very reverend Fathers and brethren. Pax Christi. You will have learned already that to my great joy I have resigned the generalship. I hope it will be for the glory of the Lord and the good of the order, and my own in particular. You must unite with me in thanking the Lord and in praying for me, that I may reap that fruit from this step which our Lord wills; I still remain the same loving father to you that I always was; God bless you. Rome, October the 14th, 1607. Your reverences' brother in the Lord, Camillus of Lellis."

Father Biagio de Opertis, provincial of Naples, was elected to be the general pro tempore, and was approved and confirmed by a brief of Pope Paul V. There were present at this election, Cardinal Ginnasi, Msgr. Seneca, bishop of Anagni, a great friend of the Saint, three consultants-general, five provincials, and the secretary of the consulta. None of these would ever have consented to Camillus's resignation, had they not seen that he was overwhelmed with his labors and his travels, which he thought his office obliged him to.

The spiritual joy of Camillus in disburdening himself of these duties was such that when the Fathers' deputies to the diet arrived in Rome, he washed and kissed all their feet, to the confusion of all who beheld the holy old man in this exercise of deep humility. The only thing which

pained him was his leaving the order with a debt of more than thirty-two thousand scudi, contracted chiefly to pay the expenses of the great body of laborers that were necessary to serve so many hospitals.

He was, indeed, of a disposition so generous, even prodigal in his liberality, that he deserved the encomium of the royal prophet: "He hath distributed, he hath given to the poor: his justice remaineth for ever and ever (Ps. 111:9).

Cardinal Salviati used to wonder at this and often said: "This man was poor born, and lived in poverty, in his youth he never had money to spend. Where then has he learned to be so liberal?"

But who can set bounds to charity, when it comes to burn with such a flame as that which consumed Camillus, of whom we may say the same that St. Paul said of himself, that neither labors, nor afflictions, nor fatigues, nor infirmities, nor death, nor the most fearful calamity, could separate him from the love of Jesus Christ and of His poor.

It will always be for the honor of our Saint, that while he was profuse in his liberality for the benefit of the order and of the poor, he never spent anything for his own advantage. In his clothes, in his food, and in everything, he observed most strictly the limits prescribed by his vow of poverty, choosing for himself, and taking as his lot, only hunger, thirst, vigils, distress, contempt, derision, the cup of bitterness, ragged clothing, and lastly, the heavy cross of Jesus Christ, made up of perfect mortification and all that the men of this world most detest and abhor.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Exercises of Camillus after His Resignation

Camillus, now reduced to a state of obedience, and free from all the cares of government, left to God the care of his order, and employed himself solely in gaining spiritual strength to end his days holily and to advance in perfection.

He was often heard to repeat: "Now, by the grace of my God, I have nothing else to do but to bewail the time that I have spent to no purpose; to unite myself perfectly with Him; to fill my sack with good works; and finally, to be prepared for death."

He retired for this purpose into the hospital of the Annunziata at Naples, which had been again given up to the order, and did not even care to go up to Rome on occasion of the fourth general chapter (where the same Father Biagio Opertis was elected and confirmed as general, March 19, 1608), but placed all his happiness in living with his poor sick and in instructing his children, no longer by words, but by the more lively example of charity. Holy obedience could make him change his residence, but he never changed this spirit or lost his fervor.

In every city he chose the hospital for his lodging; when he slept in the house, he gave orders that he should be called at any time, even in the night, and sent to recommend the souls of the dying, and complained of the superiors if they had spared him, telling them often to have no respect for his person.

During his residence in Milan, his only pleasure seemed to be, to remain day and night in the hospital, working without rest or intermission. I was informed of this by

a brother who wrote to me from that place as follows: "Our Father Camillus, by the grace of God, is well and thinks so little of himself that we are all lost in admiration. The labors he endures seem quite wonderful. He is on guard every night and never sleeps more than four hours. He communicates the sick, gives the holy oil, carries the dead to be buried, and every day preaches to the poor people with the crucifix in his hand." Such was Camillus's mode of life, and rough and laborious as it was, he accounted it most happy, and would not have changed it for any other in the world.

Conversing on this point with a priest of our order, he said: "Pray for me, your reverence, that our Lord may make me reap from my happy state the fruit which He in His love desires; and this can only be, that I may attain to the height of true religious perfection. And you must know that, by the grace of our Lord, I am so contented, that I would not exchange my state whatever, without any exception."

In a letter to the same priest he wrote: "You asked me whether I am contented; I tell you that I am so much so that I know not how I could be more so, except in two things. The first is, that I do not know whether I am in the grace of my Creator. The second is, if our Lord would reveal to me, so to say, that my sins are pardoned and that I shall be saved. This, my Father, would make me happier, yea, truly happy."

Notwithstanding the happiness that he here professes to feel, it must be owned that his heart was sometimes oppressed when he thought of the debts of the order, as we may see from a letter written by him to Father Pietro Francesco Pellizzoni, where we find: "For the rest, venerable Father, do me the kindness sometimes to write and tell me how you and all the rest are, and whether there

are many sick in the hospitals and in the city; and whether you visit St. Spirito, and what amount of alms is collected; and whether our Lord has sent any aid to pay off any part of the debts, which would give me great comfort, as I contracted them. Among the other things which I beg of the Lord in my cold prayers is this, that our debts may be lightened. I hope that our Lord will give us this grace, and others also."

Though this favor was not granted to our Saint in his lifetime, yet it was given a little after his death; for God, mindful of the great sums which he had spent for His poor, was pleased to restore it with interest to his children.

Signor Ferrante Soto was ill, and being desirous to take some saint for his special patron, was much perplexed in choosing one. One morning the glorious St. Mary Magdalen appeared to him in a dream and said to him: "Ferrante, take me for your advocate." This he confessed with his own mouth. So he made his will, leaving all his money to the order, after the death of Gaspare Mercato. This man died in Naples, August 26, 1622, and the order succeeded to an inheritance of more than one hundred thousand scudi; and so the debts were paid off at once and the house of the novitiate opened in Rome. Thus were fulfilled the predictions of Camillus, that the time would come when God would send sacks of money to the order.

Let us now return to Camillus, whom we left in the hospital of Milan. It would not be easy to relate all the works of charity which he practiced there. Every morning he went about making some new contrivance for the good of the sick. To prevent them from soiling their feet when they got out of bed, he procured an iron scraper with which he cleansed the pavement of the rooms.

He often reminded the priors to provide linen or whatever was wanting. He gave them notice if the meat was tough, or the wine hard, or the broth badly made; and he was so assiduous in these charitable offices that the priors, not understanding the hearty zeal whence they proceeded, put him down as a troublesome and dissatisfied fellow. And he rejoiced in being thought lightly of in behalf of his beloved poor.

By the same means he prevailed on the priors to remove the women's ward from the men's, and to destroy some little rooms which made the hospital close, confined, and damp.

While Camillus was totally absorbed in these pious works, he received an order from the general and his consulta to proceed at once to Genoa to visit the house there. Then was seen to what a degree our Saint's perfection had arrived.

Although the wound in his leg was much worse, and although he found such pleasure in serving his beloved sick, yet he obeyed so readily that he departed in a few hours after receiving the order. He wrote in answer to the consulta as follows: "I have received a letter from your reverences, in which you command me to go to Genoa. I received the letter yesterday, and to-day I start: I will without fail endeavor to put things in a right course, without any kind of commanding and ordering, but only by exhortations and by obliging myself to give a good example in my actions."

After his arrival in Genoa, when he had put things in a right train, he wrote to the consulta almost complaining of having been again entrapped into a position of command. "I should have expected anything sooner than that your reverences would have commanded me to make this visit. But for two reasons I willingly do it, one is holy

obedience, which for so many years I have promised, and which I never was put in circumstances to perform; the other is the hope that it is to the service of our Lord and the good of our order. For the rest, your reverences know well that I have had enough commanding for two and twenty years and more. It is now time for me to attend to myself; and this, not to shirk from labor, but for the glory of God and my salvation, and the good of the order. I know that your reverences are fully aware of all this. But the judgments of God are hidden. I submit myself to holy obedience and to everything which God wills. Remember that I shall be always faithful to my superiors and to my order."

And shortly after he adds: "My leg is a little worse than usual. I mean that the wound is a little larger, and to-day I have begun to give it a few days' rest, that I may check it." Thus did the holy man, after being general of the order, after spending his years in continual labors, in his old age and in infirmity, persevere in obedience and labor, as if he were still young and strong.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Method of Life Observed By St. Camillus During His Stay in the Hospital of St. Spirito

Camillus, after spending many months in Milan and Genoa, resolved to return to Rome, to visit the sanctuaries of that holy city. As he wished to go forth to meet the Spouse with his lamp burning and to be found at death occupied in the works of charity, he obtained leave from the Father-General to pass the nights with his companion in the hospital of St. Spirito; and he also begged a room to sleep in from the prior, Canon Francesco Bosio.

On All Saints' day, 1609, he put in practice the following rule of living. Old and infirm as he was, he took the discipline every day; he slept in his clothes on Friday and Saturday, to be more ready to leave his bed. For supper he contented himself with a morsel of bread and half a glass of wine, and he sometimes deprived himself even of this. He never allowed himself more than four or five hours of sleep, after which he went down into the hospital, and after making a short prayer before the Most Holy Sacrament, he visited carefully every bed, to see if there was any sick man in danger or dying.

If he found one in such case, he asked him whether he had received the sacraments, he helped him to make the usual protestations, gave him Extreme Unction, presented to him the crucifix or a medal to kiss, so that by invoking the names of Jesus and Mary he might gain the plenary indulgence, and never left him till he saw him either in good dispositions to die or actually dead.

This first review being over, he knelt again before the Holy Sacrament or before the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and there made the hour's mental prayer prescribed by our rules. If, however, there was any sick man in his agony, he would kneel down by his bed and make that his oratory, so as to regale his own soul and assist the dying man in his last moments.

After finishing his prayer, in which he generally spent two hours and a half, he again went round from bed to bed, and if it was winter, he covered up the sick people, warmed their feet, dried their shirts or linen; and if it was summer, although the number of sick was often more than four hundred, he gave them all fresh water to wash their parched mouths. And if he who gives a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple shall not lose his reward, what

reward shall our Saint receive, who, for the love of Christ, gave so many?

After finishing this charitable work, he proceeded to another which he called "refreshment"; it consisted in grating bread and sopping it in wine, which he distributed to the weakest and most worn of the patients, giving them at the same time fresh eggs, or a pot of jelly, or whatever was best suited to their state. Many a poor man's life did he save by this charitable refreshment.

He always wished to be present when the medicine was given, to encourage those who suffered from nausea, that they might not refuse to swallow it, and after they had taken it, he would give them a piece of orange or pomegranate, to take away the taste. When it was near the time for Communion, he would awaken all who were to receive it and ask them whether they had eaten or drunk anything since midnight and whether they wanted to go to confession, and then he would exhort them to prepare themselves to receive the Divine Sacrament with sentiments of true devotion.

After they had communicated, he would keep near them, to see that they had quite swallowed the Sacred Host, for fear that if any of it remained in their parched mouths, some unfortunate accident might happen; and he would tell them not to go to sleep and not to spit too soon, but to beg God's pardon for their sins, as that was the best possible time to speak to God of their eternal salvation. He would not take his departure before making a bed and changing the sheets of some of the worst cases, enduring for the love of God the intolerable odor that came from them.

Such was Camillus's occupation in the darkness and silence of the night, observed only by the sleepless eye of the Most High, and witnessed only by the sick and a few

nurses of the hospital. Thus, that he might at the same time be of service to the sick and to the children of the world, he offered to God all these good works for those who were then sleeping or wallowing in the enjoyment of sin.

When morning came, his companion took his place, and he retired into his room to say his office, to avoid the distraction that the groans and other noises of the sick might have occasioned him. After saying his office, he bandaged his leg, and then he again went down to the hospital and said Mass, which he usually offered to the Eternal Father for the needs of Holy Church, of his order, and particularly for all the sick and dying.

After his thanksgiving he walked through the hospital, doing whatever work of charity was required. At dinner time he handed the food to the sick, or brought them some baked pears or roasted apples; and to finish his day, he was not satisfied unless he made the beds of four or five of the sick men that most required that assistance; after this he returned to the house of the Maddalena so happy and so joyful that he might well sing with David: "Acceptable is the man that sheweth mercy and lendeth." (Psalm 111:5).

One would have thought all these labors enough to satisfy any fervor of devotion; yet, though he had been on his feet from midnight to noon, he complained that the time was too short and that the clock of Castel St. Angelo struck too soon, for he thought that he had done nothing for the good of the poor. Hence he used to be so impatient to return to his dear hospital that he would never remain in the house much more than three hours.

On Sundays, however, and holydays of obligation, he followed a different rule. He remained at home, in order that he might go to hear sermons and instructions

and that he might join the other religious at our usual spiritual exercises in the evening.

It is wonderful that amidst all these privations Camillus was as cheerful as any one else could be in the midst of ease and plenty; but our wonder is increased when we think of the tortures which the old wound in his leg, which continually became worse and worse, caused him. From his being on his legs so long at a time, it sometimes became so bad that he could find no words to express the pain it was to him; and as this pain was always greatest at the time of getting out of bed, he suspected that it might be a trick of the devil, to put impediments in the way of his charity, and therefore he jumped out of bed all the more hastily, and sometimes struck his sore leg so violently against the floor and so increased the pain that he was obliged to totter to the hospital, and when he got there to drag himself along from bed to bed by the help of his hands.

One night he fell down between two beds so violently that he bruised his face in a way which moved the pity of all the sick, who said to him: "Father, you totter as you walk, rest yourself." But he only replied: "My children, I am your servant; I must do whatever I can to serve you."

Another morning, long before dawn, when he had given the usual refreshment to the worst patients, all the lamps had gone out, and he did not remember that the iron chafing-dish was standing in the middle of the infirmary, so he fell over it with his wounded leg and came to the ground with such force that it gave him torturing pain; yet he did not rest from his labors till noon.

From all this we may easily perceive how powerful must have been the fervor of that love which gave rise to such unwearied labors and such constancy in suffering.

On this subject I will quote part of a letter written to me after the death of the Saint by one of our priests: "I will not speak of the affection with which he served the poor people in St. Spirito, because my words would but cloud over the brightness of his charity. But this I cannot help writing, for I cannot get it out of my mind, that when he was attending on a sick person, he looked like a hen with her chickens or like a mother at the bedside of her sick child. For, as if his arms and hands were not sufficient for all the offices of his affection, he might generally be seen bent over the poor man, as though he wished to communicate to him his heart, his breath, and his very soul.

Before leaving the bed, too, he would keep smoothing the pillow and gently removing the clothes from the sick man's face and feet and sides; and as if he were attracted by some invisible loadstone, he seemed as if he could not force himself away, but hovered about the bed, inquiring how he felt, whether he wanted anything else, and giving him some maxim to meditate on for the good of his soul.

I know not what more the most affectionate mother could have done for her only child in his sickness; and no one who did not know the holy Father would ever have thought that he had gone to the hospital to serve all the sick without distinction, but would have supposed that all his care and all his interest was wrapt up in the life of that one poor man, and that he had no other thing in the world to think about.

During these last years, your reverence knows that many have wondered, how with his many infirmities, eating scarcely anything, and with the constant discharge from his wound, he could bear the fatigue of watching

from midnight till after the sick peoples' dinner-time. And we know that two or three times he fell down from fatigue and that his life was in danger. But the strength of his soul gave almost miraculous vigor to his body.

I have heard from his own lips that sometimes he had felt so ill that it seemed quite impossible to get up, yet, with great trouble, he got up and went down into the hospital, where he was so weak as to be obliged to hold himself by the beds and the columns, to prevent his falling. Still, after passing five or six beds, he felt quite invigorated, gathering fresh strength and spirit from his labors; and after these were over, he came from St. Spirito to our house, and every step he took he was in agony from the corns he had on the soles of his feet."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Five Graces Bestowed by Our Lord on Camillus

Camillus was pursuing this method of life in St. Spirito, when God was pleased to refine him as gold in the furnace and to make him experience, in part, the words of St. Paul: "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" (II. Cor. 11:29.) For this purpose he inflicted on him a loss of appetite, so that he not only felt no inclination to eat, but felt disgust and abhorrence for eating.

This was the last of the five graces; for this was the name by which he called the infirmities with which he was abundantly favored by the Lord during his whole life. This was, I say, the last; and the first was that incurable wound, which Heaven sent him in his youth, and which continued to torment him till his death. A blessed wound, through which Camillus came to be practically acquainted with what the hospitals were, and which thus

gave rise to our order, besides exercising him in an heroic patience.

At least a pound weight of matter ran from it every day, which soaked the bandages and stocking, and ran down into his shoe, and thus kept his foot continually wet. He used an immense quantity of lint which different ladies provided for him in the city where he happened to be.

In Rome the nuns of Tor di Specchj, Signora Prudenza Diaz, and the Duchess of Torza, made it with their own hands, on account of the veneration that they all had for him.

It is worthy of remark that, although all the physicians pronounced the wound to be something strange and extraordinary, as it was putrid, corrosive, deep, and so large that it extended nearly round his leg, yet the matter that came from it in such quantity was not fetid; on the contrary, a woman in Genoa, who washed the bandages, declared that the water she had used smelt sweet and left at the bottom of the vessel a deposit of yellow wax.

This first cross or grace, to use the term employed by Camillus, was borne by him for forty-six years, and the fruit that he gathered from it was the persuasion that it was sent by Heaven, to oblige him to remain, or, so to say, to imprison him in the hospitals.

The second grace was occasioned by his unwearied labors by night and day in the service of the sick while he was superintendent of the hospital of St. Giacomo; it was a bad rupture, which obliged him always to wear a great iron truss, which gave him such pain as no one could imagine who had not experience of it. He bore this cross for at least thirty-six years; and the profit he drew from it was that he imagined himself sold by his Eternal Father as a slave to the poor and that it was fitting that he should bear the iron badge of his servitude.

The third grace was two very hard corns that he had under his bad foot, so painful that they made the streets feel as if they were strewed with thorns, so that his occasional lameness was not so much caused by the wound on his leg as by the corns, which were sometimes so painful that in riding he could not put his foot into the stirrup, but was obliged to substitute a handkerchief full of straw. This cross afflicted him for twenty-five years and reminded him at every step he took that this earth was not the country which the Lord intended for him, and that he must therefore aspire to the heavenly country and to gain the crown and the royal robe by many good works and many labors.

The fourth grace began during his illness in Naples; from this time he was always troubled with the stone, and was often obliged to undergo an operation for it.

Camillus endured this cross ten years to the great profit of his soul, as it taught him that he must learn to serve God in the midst of pains and afflictions. Hence, he used to say, that the most certain sign of a generous love is to force oneself to please God, not only when the soul is borne down by the weakness of the body, but even when in dryness and forsaken it tastes no spiritual comfort.

And this was the road through which our Lord chose to lead His servant, not feeding him with pleasure and sweetness, as He often does to His other servants, but leaving him, generally, abandoned and in dryness of spirit.

The fifth and last grace was that which was sent to him at this time, and it was a strange kind of disgust for all food, which kept on increasing, so that at last he felt sick, not only when he saw it, but even when he heard it mentioned. Yet he did violence to himself and took it courageously for the love of God, comforting himself by saying: "This is in recompense for the inordinate pleasure

I once took in eating;" and at the same time declaring that he suffered three distinct torments at once, one in thinking of eating, another in the act of eating, and another in that he was generally sick after eating.

He endured this cross for thirty months; it was his last, and it brought him to the grave. This cross made him realize that his pilgrimage was come to an end, and that it was therefore God's will that he should not find any longer either trouble or pleasure in anything here below. With this consideration in his mind, he treated his new and most painful cross as a gift of God; and instead of trying to cure it in its commencement, he was most careful to conceal it, for fear of falling into the hands of the physicians, who might have ordered him to change his mode of life or leave off for a time his exercises of charity, which he would have considered the greatest possible misfortune. So, without any regard for himself, he went on working as if his health was still robust and his years were few.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Camillus in Bocchianico Assists the Poor During a Famine — Miracles Wrought in Favor of His Charity

At the prayer of Cardinal Ginnasi, the protector of the order, Pope Paul V published a rescript giving to F. Camillus, as founder, the faculty of being present and voting in every consultation and chapter; and the Father General and the consultors deeming it necessary to have the benefit of his experience and advice, asked him to leave the hospital of St. Spirito for a little while and go with them to Naples. The good Father immediately obeyed, but they did not keep him long with them in that city,

as there were urgent calls to send him as visitor to the houses of Abruzzo, for which province he set out in May, 1612.

In this the providence of God seemed to have expressly sent him to lighten the miseries of Bocchianico, his native place. There was such a great and universal famine in that part of the country that the poor people were obliged to feed on grass, so that many were ill, many died, and almost all looked as green and sickly as the grass they ate.

Camillus's arrival was most opportune: and when he found that the people took no measures whatever to meet the evil, he acted like a true patriot, or rather like a father, in relieving the sufferers. There happened to be in our house an abundant provision of beans, peas, dried figs, and other winter provender. Camillus soon routed out this and distributed it liberally to about two hundred beggars that came to the gate, besides sending supplies to the bashful poor at their own houses.

When this provision was consumed, the young beans had begun to ripen, and Camillus gave notice that any poor man might go into a small farm of ours, called St. Biagio, and there eat as many as he wanted; this made up for the loss of the alms that used to be given at the gate. All availed themselves of this permission, and not only ate on the spot, but carried home whole bundles to their families. Scarce two measures of beans had been sown; and although there were so many hands to gather them and mouths to eat them during many days, yet at last, when it was thought that there would be hardly one left, they were found to be so prolific that thirteen measures were reaped, which Camillus ordered to be cooked and dispensed to the most needy.

But this was very inadequate to the need; and Camillus was moved to compassion by the numbers of poor women

who staid at home through modesty, and he called on all the people who had property, the priors of hospitals and of the confraternities, telling them that he had nothing more to give and that they must now remember that it was their duty to relieve the urgent distress. His powerful words at last overcame all difficulties, and he obtained from the various parties the sum of two hundred scudi.

As the priors could give nothing without the leave of the vicar-general of Chieti, Camillus went there himself and returned again immediately, performing the whole journey on foot, as the roads were dangerous for horses. This violent exercise made his leg much worse and brought on a fever of which he nearly died.

As soon as the fever had somewhat abated, finding that the two hundred scudi would not be enough to relieve the poor, he obtained, by his exhortations and prayers, that the municipal council should be called together, and in spite of his fever, he attended it in person and spoke with such energy that the members were carried away by his eloquence and the weight of his arguments, and gave two hundred scudi more, which he was to distribute from house to house.

As he was confined to his bed and so unable to distribute the money himself, he chose three persons of known probity to do it for him; and he conversed with these for two or three hours every day, that he might know exactly all that was going on.

As I have related the wonderful multiplication of the beans, I cannot refrain from telling some other miracles which God wrought in the same place, and nearly at the same time, for the glory of His faithful servant.

A little before the illness I have just mentioned, Martha Galeazza, wife of Gio. Battista Grillo, offered him a skin of wine, containing about two barrels. He would not

exactly accept it, nor yet would he refuse it, but told her that she might send him every morning as much as she pleased. She sent some to him every day for a month, she sent some to other persons, and some to her husband, who was absent at Villamagna, sometimes a barrel at a time, and she also used it for her family till October.

At the vintage time she wished to empty the skin in order to fill it with new wine, so she first filled one barrel and afterwards many jars, and as the skin was not yet exhausted, she invited her neighbors to bring their vessels, which were filled. Martha, her husband, and her neighbors, astonished at this multiplication of the wine that had been devoted to the use of Camillus, published an account of the fact and confirmed it by solemn oaths.

A little while after Camillus went to Loreto, to visit some relatives of his mother, taking with him Gio. Bernardino di Cola, and Antonio dell' Abbate to lead the horses. As they could not get to Loreto before eight o'clock at night, Camillus went to lodge at the house of the Capuchins. The good Fathers received them with the greatest kindness, lamenting that they had so little in the house to give them to eat and no wine whatever, and that it was too late to go out into the town to procure more. They begged Camillus to excuse it, and he only answered: "Never mind, if only we have God's grace."

The two attendants were then seated at table, and some bread, some broth, and a salad were set before them. This poverty of food did not distress them, but they were somewhat distressed to see one of the religious fill two pitchers with water from a jar, beseeching them to put up with the want of wine, as the brothers themselves had been without it that evening.

At this moment Camillus came into the refectory, and seeing what was on the table he blessed it and went away.

In the meantime the horses, which had been left in the garden, made a noise, so Antonio got up from table to secure them, thus leaving Bernardino to sup alone. The latter was tired with the journey and ate very heartily; but as he had not much fancy for water, he was resolved not to drink till he had finished eating; but after a while, getting very thirsty, he began to drink, and to his astonishment found that it was wine and not water. His first feeling was to be angry with the religious, who, he thought, wanted to save his wine or to play off some joke upon him. The religious, however, knew well enough what he had put into the pitchers and would not believe it was wine till he had tasted it, and then to convince Bernardino, he gave him the jar of water from which he had poured out the liquor into the pitchers; they concluded at once that it was a miracle wrought by the blessing of St. Camillus.

Bernardino immediately got up from supper and went to call Antonio to taste the wine; they called in three others to witness the fact, who all of them afterwards authenticated their testimony by oath.

Another thing happened in Bocchianico, when Laura Ciruggi, wife of Onofrio di Lellis, a cousin of Camillus, set apart a vessel of oil for the lamp before the Blessed Sacrament in our church and for the other necessities of our house; and as she wished to find out the quantity used in a month, she put it aside into a place that no one but herself could get at, that all that was given out might pass through her hands; she had drawn a great many flasks, and yet the oil was not diminished. At last thinking that she had drawn enough to empty a much larger vessel, she spoke of it as a miracle and gave the glory of it to our Saint, who had ordered her to perform the charitable work.

But Bocchianico was not the only place that witnessed the miracles that God wrought for the glory of our Saint. One very similar to those just related was wrought in our house in Rome.

A little before Camillus went with the Father General to Naples, he brought home with him one morning two poor men and gave them to the care of Domenico Ronci, the cook (who afterwards deposed to the fact on oath), ordering him to give them two basins of soup; after they were served, he told him to go to the gate and give a basin to each of the poor people standing there. He went to count them, and found them so numerous that he told Camillus, if he gave soup to all, there would be none left for the religious; Camillus said to him: "What, do you distrust the goodness of God?" and ordered him to make no answer, but distribute the soup. The cook obeyed, and Camillus assisted in distributing it, adding meat, bread, and wine, to refresh the poor fellows.

When it was near dinner time, the sub-minister came to see if everything was ready, and hearing what had taken place and seeing with his own eyes that there was no soup nor enough meat, he went to the Prefect, who only shrugged his shoulders and said nothing, as it was Father Camillus that had done it, intending to make up as well as he could with cheese and other things. In the meantime the sub-minister was passing by the door of Camillus's room, and looking through the key-hole, he saw him on his knees, with his arms extended in the form of a cross — then he went on and rang for dinner. The cook, thinking that there was not enough and that he must be sparing in dividing the messes of soup, found the copper full and the meat as if it had not been touched, so he immediately cried out: "A miracle, a miracle!" but his mouth was stopped, and he was ordered not to say a word about it,

for fear of displeasing Camillus, who was ready even to sell himself if it would have been of use to his beloved poor.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Camillus Foretells His Approaching End — He Writes a Letter to His Nephew Alexander, Which is Mysteriously Presented to Him the Same Day

After the harvest the famine ceased in Bocchianico, and Camillus recovered from his dangerous fever, though his want of appetite still remained; he resolved, therefore, to go to Naples; but before going away he preached a most fervent discourse to the people, exhorting them to avoid sin and stand fast in the grace of God.

On this occasion he foretold his approaching death in these precise words: "O my native land, remember what I have taught thee, for we shall never see each other more." When he was getting on his horse and all were pressing round to kiss his hand, he turned to Gio. Bernardino Urbanucci and said to him: "Come, Bernardino, I am going to Rome, and you will see me no more, for I shall die in that holy city. Take care and remember what I have so often told you, and try to live like a Christian and in the grace of God, otherwise hell is prepared for you." To one of his most intimate friends, who begged him to remain and bequeath his bones to the place where he first drew breath, he answered: "No, I hope to die in Rome, and leave my bones in that holy city."

But he not only foretold that he was to die soon and in Rome; he had long before foretold the very day of his death; and Paolo Renda, one of our professed, declared with an oath that he had heard him say more than once that he should die on the feast of St. Bonaventure.

He then left Bocchianico amid the tears of all who had heard these last words of his and returned to Naples, and from Naples he accompanied the consulta to Rome, where he was present at the fifth general chapter, when F. Francesco Antonio Niglio of Naples, the provincial of Rome, was elected general.

The new general wished to visit all the houses of the order and thought it necessary to take Camillus with him; and Camillus declared that he was very glad to have an opportunity of visiting the houses and hospitals in Lombardy once more before his death. In the course of his journey he said Mass in the sanctuary of Loreto, and with many sighs and tears begged the most Holy Virgin to remember him and to be his advocate in his last hour.

Afterwards he visited the houses of Bologna, of Ferrara, of Mantua, and of Milan, and everywhere he bequeathed to them maxims of virtue and instructions in piety: but when he told his children that it was probably the last time they would see him, there followed a scene like that which took place at Ephesus when the ancient Christians there took leave of their beloved master, St. Paul, and accompanied him to the ship weeping — for here no one could kiss the hand of Camillus without sighs and groans.

He then went to Genoa, a city that he loved more than any other, on account of the charity of its inhabitants to the religious and to the hospitals, and there he grew much worse and was reduced to extreme weakness: as he was always visited and served by some of the gentlemen of the place, his idea of their charity was much strengthened.

At this time a most wonderful and miraculous event happened to him. He heard that his nephew Alessandro, with a foolish idea of being able to find treasures, went to great expense in keeping in his house a Frenchman, who

was believed to be a magician, and was then just about to go and dig for a treasure in a place called Morrecino. Camillus was much grieved and wrote on half a sheet of paper a letter to him, which I will copy word for word: "My dearest nephew in Christ. Pax Christi. Our Father General has told me that you give ear to certain vanities to obtain treasures. If you do not flee from these, they will be your ruin, the ruin of your soul, your body, and your property; so do not give ear to these things. Try to live like a good Christian, in the fear of God, and keep the commandments of the Lord; and happy you if you live like a good Christian; but if you do the contrary, you must evidently go to hell, so weigh the chances well. May the Lord give you His holy grace. Genoa, July the 5th, 1613. Your loving uncle, Camillus of Lellis."

This letter was written, as you may see, on the 5th of July, and on the very same day it was mysteriously put into the hands of his nephew in the piazza at Bocchianico, in the presence of all his companions, exactly at the moment when they were going with pickaxes and spades to dig for the treasure. He was astonished when on opening it he recognized the hand of his uncle Camillus. But when he saw that it was written that very same day, and that it had come to him in some wonderful way, over a distance of more than six hundred miles, he was so struck that he put aside all thoughts of finding the treasure, sent away the Frenchman and the laborers whom he had engaged, and carried the letter round to show it to every one.

This letter, which was doubtless carried by an angel, after the death of Alessandro came into the possession of his father-in-law, Felice Leporino of Villamagna, a person of rare goodness, who kindly gave it to me, and I value it as a letter ought to be valued, which was written by a saint and carried by an angel. All this was testified and

confirmed on oath by many persons, who had the whole story from the mouth of Alessandro, and who saw and read the letter on that very 5th of July.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Camillus Returns to Rome — His Last Illness

As soon as the dangerous illness of Camillus became known at Genoa, it was whispered that if he died in that city, the people would never allow his body to be taken away. Our religious, who wished to have him buried at Rome, therefore made united prayers to God, that at least he might become so much better as to be able to be brought to the holy city. Camillus had the same desire, that his bones might rest in that place which had been drenched with the blood of innumerable martyrs; so when he was asked by many of the gentlemen of Genoa to remain there, he answered plainly: "I must go and die in Rome, for such is the will of God."

God heard the petitions of His servants, and Camillus became somewhat better, but not so much so as to be able to undertake the land journey. D. Carlo Doria, Duke of Tursi, on account of the love and veneration he bore him, furnished him with a galley, which made so fortunate a voyage that it reached Civita Vecchia in less than three days, though it always lay to at night. It made its return voyage in the same time, a circumstance which equally astonished and pleased Niccolo Rella, the captain, and D. Carlo, who had recommended the vessel to the prayers of Camillus.

From Civita Vecchia Camillus was obliged with great pain to ride as far as Santa Severa, where he was put into a litter, and arrived in Rome October 13, 1613.

When he first put his foot within the door of the house, he declared that it should be his final resting-place: "Hæc est requies mea," said he joyfully: "I am come to leave my bones here."

All the religious ran to kiss his hand, and as the prefect of the house was with them, he did not lose a moment in telling him that he had in his trunk some money which he received at Genoa to pay for his traveling expenses, and as it was so late and he was so tired, he begged to be allowed to wait till the following morning before he gave it up. The prefect granted the permission, wondering that the request had been made; but Camillus said that there was nothing to be astonished at, for if he had kept the money by him without permission, he should not have had a wink of sleep the whole night.

After he was put to bed and visited by the physicians, they ordered him among other things to abstain from saying office for a fortnight and always to eat meat: these two commands were most repugnant to his feelings. The fortnight had not passed before he sent for the prefect, whom he had chosen as his confessor, and said to him: "When the doctor comes, ask him whether I am so ill that I cannot say my office; but when you ask him, take care to put in nothing of your own, but let him speak exactly as he thinks." The prefect told him to have no scruple, as the fortnight was not yet past. "At any rate," said Camillus, "it is as well to be sure, for who knows whether the doctor intended the fortnight to begin from the time he gave the order;" so the superior was obliged to do what he asked him.

One Friday he had to drink a cup of beef-tea, and when he had put it to his lips, he hesitated and would not drink it till he had been assured that the doctor had ordered it for him.

A short time after, feeling a little better, he wished to visit the holy apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, in their venerable Basilica. When he had got to the Bridge of St. Angelo, he let down the carriage window and could not take his eye off his beloved hospital of St. Spirito; and he could not be satisfied without getting out at the gate, and leaning for support on two of our religious, he wanted to go and console all the sick. It was a touching sight to see all the officials and nurses run up to kiss his hands the moment they saw him enter; and so fresh was the memory of his fervent zeal that they said one to another: "Now we must work more vigilantly, for here is Father Camillus, to overlook us."

After his visit to the hospital he went on to satisfy his devotion at St. Peter's, where he recommended his order and himself to the holy apostles with the most fervent devotion.

A few days after, either he was stronger, or his insatiable charity made him fancy he was so, for he insisted on going again to visit the hospital, and this time walked the whole way. He arrived there without any accident and employed himself in various acts of charity, and, as if he felt it to be his last visit, he could hardly tear himself away from it. Among other kind things he said to the sick, the attendants remarked the following: "God knows, my brethren, how I should like to remain always with you, but as that is not permitted to me, my heart shall remain at any rate." Thus did he make his farewell visit to his beloved hospital.

On his return he was so weak that he was obliged to wait in a shop till a carriage passed that could take him home, and then he went to bed. But his charity was too active to allow him to remain there long.

As he was not able any more to go to the hospitals, he found his hospital in the house, for in the infirmary there were two lay brothers, and he often got out of bed, dressed himself and visited them and did for them some little service, though he was much more ill than either of them; then he would exhort them to patience and say: "As I cannot go to the hospital, I will at least make up by visiting these dear brethren."

When he heard the bell that summoned the religious to go to the hospital, he was quite carried away with enthusiasm and envied those who could go. He always wished to be told the names of those who went; and when they returned, he congratulated them, saying to them: "Happy you, my Fathers, who have been in that holy vineyard." Besides this, he begged his companion not to give up the keys of the room he had in the hospital till after his death, saying: "Although I cannot be present bodily in the hospital, yet I am there in heart and desire, and the key will serve as a pledge of it."

A little after, he became so much worse that he could not move from his bed, and then he often declared his disease to be incurable: "I am old," he said, "and my infirmity increases every day; my leg discharges so much matter that God alone could work the miracle of restoring me, but I am sure that I am not to get well."

On the 1st of May, 1614, early in the morning, he sent for the prefect of the house and asked him if he was provided with the new holy oil; and when he was told that he was not, Camillus said that he had dreamed so that night; but he asked him to get it directly as there would soon be need of it, first for Brother Gio. Maria, of Verona, and soon after for himself, which prediction was verified.

The good Father's thoughts were so fixed on death that all his dreams spoke to him of it. One day the physicians held a consultation in his presence, and as one proposed one thing and another, another, Camillus concluded: "I have used so many remedies in Naples, in Genoa, and here in Rome, and yet I see no improvement, so I say that we know not the secrets of God. Who knows whether God will not have me suffer something for love of Him? And when shall we ever do any good, if not now, when we are at the end of life?"

The next day he was told that the physicians could somewhat prolong his life, but never cure his disease. Camillus was filled with joy at this news, and cried out: "I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: We shall go into the house of the Lord" (Ps. 121:1).

The superior of the house going into his room a little while afterwards and asking how he was, was told: "I am well and happy, chiefly because I have had the good news that I am on my way to Paradise; for this is the judgment of the physicians." These words were spoken with so happy a countenance that it showed what a lively hope he had of enjoying the delights of eternity. "And why," added he, "should I not be happy, for this is the best news that I could hear? A man must once pay the forfeit of death, and I do not value this life at a farthing, if only our Lord will give me a little corner in Paradise; nor do I any longer give myself any uneasiness about the order, for God will raise up men to assist and defend it."

Camillus then gave up all idea of recovering and employed himself in uniting himself more closely with his Creator. He sent to all the convents and communities of good religious, to beg them to recommend him to God. He wrote many letters to different Fathers of our order and also to the gentlemen and ladies of the different cities.

of whose goodness he had no doubt. He begged all of them to assist him in life with their prayers and after his death with the Holy Sacrifice, promising to repay them with interest in the other life, as soon as God should grant him a place in heaven. Every one of these sent him a most affectionate answer, and he got the promise of many hundreds of Masses.

During the whole course of his illness, he never relaxed the observance of the rules which his state allowed him to fulfill. Every evening he got different Fathers to come into his room and recite the litanies, to which he always responded with his hands joined together. He made the examination of conscience, and as his room was just over the refectory, every morning and evening, and at dinner-time, he would put his head out of bed and put his ear close to the floor, and listen to what was being read; sometimes he lost not a word, thus giving a practical comment on the lesson he had often taught, that meal-times should be food for the soul as well as for the body.

A little before the feast of Pentecost, Camillus called to his bedside a brother who was to make his solemn profession on that day and said to him: "Brother, when you have made the profession and offered yourself to God by holy vows, then remember to pray for me, a miserable sinner; pray for this monster, full of defects and with no spirit, and pray our Lord to give me the grace to save myself."

The good Father had been ill many weeks without going out of his room, getting up every morning to hear Mass, when his profound humility suggested to him that he ought to go into the common infirmary. He made this change on the 18th of May, 1614, in a state of such weakness, that, though he was supported by two brothers, he went with his head bent down almost to his knees, and

could not manage the little distance between his room and the infirmary without resting halfway.

In the meantime it became known in Rome that he had become much worse, and religious and seculars of all classes came in great numbers to visit him, and the spiritual edification they received, both from his words and from the sight of the venerable old man, not in any convenient room, but in the poor common room which served for all the sick, was very great. No one left him without kissing his hands and begging his blessing.

His fame for sanctity was so great that a woman came to our gate with a sick child in her arms and begged most earnestly to be taken to Camillus that he might touch and bless the boy. But the Fathers, knowing how annoyed Camillus would be, sent her away.

Yet they allowed a young nobleman, who had become so habituated to a certain great sin that for twelve years scarce a day had passed without his committing it, to be presented to him. His good director had advised him to recommend himself to the prayers of Camillus, who promised to pray for him; and the power of his prayers was such that from that time the young man was astonished to find himself completely changed, and he began to frequent the sacraments. This miraculous change was attested by the young man himself, who wrote a certificate of it with his own hand and gave it to his confessor.

So strong was the opinion of Camillus's sanctity that anything which he had ever used, was appropriated and preserved as a relic; people sent towels and all kinds of linen to our house for him to use for a little while, and then they had them taken back, and put them by.

The people of the house, too, after they had lost all hopes of his recovery, revenged themselves on everything that belonged to him; happy was he who could lay hands

on any of his bandages, or shoes, or stockings, or other parts of his dress. And so far did this extend that as soon as Camillus had used a cup, or anything of that kind, it disappeared and was no more seen. All these pious thefts were committed without his knowledge; yet, when he was not certain but only suspected that his rosary had been changed (for one of our religious had brought a quantity of rosaries of the same kind as that used by Camillus, and after he had used one, he secretly changed it for another) he told the infirmarian not to hang it on the nail, but to give it to him, and he put it under his pillow.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Camillus Receives the Viaticum and Extreme Unction

Camillus, feeling himself grow worse every day, earnestly entreated to be fortified with the last sacraments, that he might have more courage in his passage to the other life and be able to resist every assault of our great enemy. Cardinal Ginnasi, our protector, was told of Camillus's wish, and such was his love and esteem for our Saint that he determined to administer the Viaticum to him with his own hands. He therefore came to our house to say Mass, July 2, 1614, the festival of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin, and after Mass he gave the Blessed Eucharist to Camillus.

The holy Father pronounced aloud three times the accustomed words, "Domine, non sum dignus," with a voice interrupted by sobs and tears, and then added: "I confess, O my Lord, I have never done any good, I am a miserable sinner; I have nothing left but to hope in Thy divine mercy, and in Thy precious blood." After receiving the Bread of Angels, he prayed for some time in silence, with

all the Fathers and brothers around him, mourning at the sight of their beloved Father preparing to leave this world.

The Cardinal, before going away, encouraged and consoled him with expressions of the tenderest love. From that time forth he confessed every morning, and he had attained to such purity of conscience that the confessor could not give him absolution, without making him accuse himself of some sin of his youth; yet for all this, he lived in fear and trembling, distrusting himself, hoping only in the blood of Jesus Christ.

To encourage himself in these sentiments, he ordered a picture to be painted, to put before his eyes during his last agony, after his own design and description. It consisted of the crucifix with an angel on each side, each holding a golden chalice to catch the blood which flowed from the sacred wounds; above were the Eternal Father, and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and two angels at the sides, offering the chalices of blood to God the Father to **atone for the sins of Camillus himself**. At the foot of the cross was the most holy Virgin on the right, praying for him, and on the left, St. Michael the Archangel, the defender of souls in their last conflict. Under the cross was this inscription: "Spare Thy servant, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious blood." Moreover, he ordered that the blood should be painted a bright red, that he might see it more easily and distinctly, and that there might be plenty of it, to give him greater confidence.

At this time his license to omit the office had expired, so he wished a fresh leave to be got from the physicians, and when the prefect of the house said that it was idle to ask a license in the case of a man who was just going to receive Extreme Unction, he answered: "Even if the candle were already lighted at my head, I must have the license

to quiet my conscience;" and they were obliged to ask for it.

Not a day passed but he was visited by persons of all ranks, and often by his great friend, F. Ferdinando, General of the Discalced Carmelites, to whose prayers he always recommended himself, and one day said to him: "I beseech you on my knees to do this, for I have been a great sinner, a gambler, and a man of bad life." He was also visited by Father Pietro Nigrelli, the Jesuit, and many others, of whom he always begged the aid of their prayers.

Among the rest, his countryman, Gaspare Massimini, from Bocchianico, came to him. Camillus, on seeing him, asked what had brought him to Rome; Massimini answered that he had come to obtain the release of D. Giovanni, his brother, who had been imprisoned by the vicar of Chieti. Camillus told him that he might return, for he would find his brother at liberty. Massimini did not readily believe this, so Camillus repeated it four or five times; at last he fully believed it and went his way, and on his return to Bocchianico found that his brother had been set at liberty the day before.

All the time he was free from visitors and doctors he devoted to listening to spiritual reading; he preferred the treatise on the other life, by F. Luca Pinelli, or Cardinal Bellarmine's exposition of the creed.

The Sunday after the feast of the Visitation, July 2, he wished again to receive the Most Holy Body of the Lord, and although he was suffering from an intense dryness in the mouth, he would not even wash his mouth out with a little water before communicating, for fear that a drop might find its way down his throat. He declared that this had always been his practice through life, both as a layman and as a priest.

Every day he felt his strength leaving him, so he asked for Extreme Unction, which was administered to him by the Father General on Friday, July 11, after he had confessed and communicated. In this last confession he was favored by God with such a deep contrition that at every accusation he struck his breast with such violence that the confessor was forced to hold his arms, for fear he should do himself some injury. In receiving the sacrament of Extreme Unction he pronounced the Confiteor with his own lips, and at the end made the responses to all the prayers and versicles, and after the function was over, he was full of joy, and said twice: "May it be to the glory of God: may it be to the glory of God."

Then he made all the Fathers and brothers sit down in a circle, and asked leave of the General to speak to them. and made them a sweet discourse, exhorting them to perfect observance of the rule, to fervent charity towards the sick, to union, to brotherly love, to purity of heart, to poverty, to obedience, to humility. Then he went on to say that they were not to be disheartened by the tempests and persecutions which the devil would raise up against the order for spite at its rescuing so many souls from his clutches; for all orders in their beginning were encompassed with difficulties, and he hoped that this would increase in extent throughout the world; that men of talent and learning would enter into it; and that after his death it would be far superior to what it had been in his lifetime. They should therefore remain firm in their vocation; they should labor with joy in this holy vineyard and not be discouraged at losing him, for if Almighty God was pleased to number him among His chosen ones, he should be able to give them much more help in Paradise than on earth, where he only committed sins and imperfections.

At last, lifting up his eyes to heaven, he concluded thus: "O my Fathers, and brethren, I beg God's mercy, and then I beg pardon of the Father General, who is here present, and of all of you, for the bad examples I have given you in times past; I assure you that it proceeded from ignorance rather than ill will. Finally, so far as God permits me, as your Father, in the name of the Most Holy Trinity, and of the Blessed Virgin, I give to you here present, as well as to the absent, and to all who shall hereafter join us, a thousand benedictions." All knelt at these last words, and nothing was heard but sighs and sobs.

All of them, and first of all the Father General, went up to him, by kissing his hands and bathing them in tears. The good Father, on the other hand, like the Patriarch Jacob, embraced affectionately his dear children, giving each of them a particular and distinct blessing. Seeing that he was tired, they then asked him to repose a while, but he answered with his usual kindness: "I can never be tired with serving my Fathers and brethren."

Then being told that there were some gentlemen waiting to see him, the kind Father grieved that he was too tired to see them and answered: "Do give my excuses to these gentlemen; tell them that I have received the holy oil, and want to be left to myself a little." And when F. Marcello Mansi suggested to him that he might perhaps allow the gentlemen to see him, as they had come for the comfort and profit of their souls, he said: "F. Marcello, we can die only once; so I must try to die well, and I hope to do so with the help of my Lord."

CHAPTER NINETEEN

*Camillus, after Receiving the Pope's Blessing,
Passes Happily to the Lord*

Nothing was now wanting to Camillus but the Pope's blessing with a plenary indulgence. Some of our Fathers begged Signor Luca Antonio Eustachi, a cameriere segreto to his Holiness, to obtain it. And as he was a great admirer of our Saint, he was so solicitous to do so that he came the very same evening to dispense the precious gift in the name of his Holiness. Camillus received it with unspeakable pleasure and respect, protesting that he could not receive a greater favor and that he gave God infinite thanks for having brought him to Rome to die, where he could procure so great a benefit. Then he added: "May our Lord grant many years of life to his Holiness, and may he go on in God's grace from well to better."

On Saturday, July 12, he was, as usual, visited by many religious, and among the rest by Father Agostino Caracciolo, and F. Francesco Zazzera, of the Oratory, and Fra. Santi, Guardian of the Capuchins, with whom he conversed on the love of God, and declared that hardness of heart was so unnatural that he could not conceive how a creature could help loving its Creator above all things. F. Zazzera, in taking leave, said to him: "When you are in Paradise, Father, salute particularly our blessed Philip, who will, I believe, come to meet you, as you were his spiritual child."

F. Caracciolo, before going away, would have his blessing, which he begged with extraordinary humility on his knees. He also confessed to our Fathers, that if he were allowed he would remain with him night and day to serve

him, on account of the delight which his holy conversation gave him.

But we should never finish if we were to relate all that he said and did in the last few days of his life. I will only say that, weak and emaciated as he was, it appeared miraculous that his tongue should still be so active.

Our Fathers often heard him break out into sweet colloquies with his Lord. Sometimes he would say: "Ah, my Lord, how am I obliged to Thee, and how much do I owe Thee." Sometimes he would extend his arms in the form of a cross and lift them up towards heaven and say: "I thank Thee, O Lord, I thank Thee. I am a vile sinner, unworthy of any good thing. How merciful Thou art, O Lord; I mean to be saved only through this Thy mercy." Sometimes he made an entire oblation of himself: "I will come, O Lord, I will come, not when I please, but when Thou pleasest." Again he would acknowledge everything to come from God: "O Lord, all that I have been, that I am, that I shall be, all comes from Thy grace."

Sometimes again he would think on the days of his youth and cry out: "I repent, O Lord, for having offended Thee; would that I had not done it, but I hope in Thee, O my Lord." He had different medals tied to both his arms, which he kept kissing, to gain the indulgences attached to them for the hour of death.

On this day the picture that he had ordered was brought to him; as soon as he had fixed his eyes on it, he saw that between the Madonna and the cross the painter had drawn him on his knees, waiting for a drop of the precious blood to fall on him and wash him; and, moreover, that the words, "Spare thy servant whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious blood", were written on a scroll coming out of his mouth. Camillus, on the sight of this, cried out, "Thou knowest, O Lord, that

this was not my intention, but as God has willed that it should be so, I take it as a sign that I should hope all the more, as God has been thus merciful to me." Then turning to the Blessed Virgin, he said: "O Mother, most holy, procure for me grace from thy Son to suffer willingly every evil, and if I have not enough, send me more."

Then he caused the picture to be hung in a place where he could always see it, and on it he meditated continually; and such was his confidence in that precious blood that he ordered the infirmarian to tell the Father whose duty it might be to assist him in his last moments, at the time of his death, and even for a quarter of an hour after his death, to repeat acts expressing his hope of being saved by the merits and blood of Jesus Christ.

He had now entered upon the thirtieth month of his loss of appetite, and he felt the utmost abhorrence for everything offered him; and when the time came for him to eat, his sufferings became excruciating; yet in obedience to the physician and to those who had the care of him, he never refused anything they gave him, for the love of God.

The same Saturday evening he was visited by Don Francesco de Castro, ambassador of the king of Spain, who recommended himself and his whole family to the prayers of the Saint. At first the conversation was carried on before a good many; but he made a sign to be left alone with Camillus, and he stayed talking to him some time, probably to recommend the royal family and the affairs of Spain to his prayers.

After the visits of this day were over, for many had come to see him, chiefly priests and religious, one of his people said to him: "You would receive no visits yesterday, Father, and to-day God has sent so many persons that they have made up for the deficiency of yesterday." Camillus answered: "These were all religious, and God

has sent them to help me, that I might recommend myself to their prayers;" and then he went on to lament the estimation which men held him in: "Wonderful! everybody comes to recommend himself to my prayers as if I was somebody: they do not know that I am a vile sinner." The Father replied: "At any rate, God will regard their faith." Camillus answered: "The Lord God grant that they lose not the reward of their good will."

On Sunday morning, July 13, in the presence of many Fathers and brothers, he made the usual protests, repeating that he wished to live and die a true and faithful Catholic, and that he believed firmly all that our holy mother, the Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church, believes; he exhorted his religious ever to stand fast in the same faith, and particularly in due obedience to the Roman Pontiffs. He kept the paper on which these protests were written close to him and ordered that it should be hung round his neck when dead and be buried with him; he devoutly kissed the crucifix in confirmation of this his last wish.

In the evening he was visited by Signor Francesco, the nephew of Cardinal Ginnasi, and by Emilio Sperelli, his secretary, who were sent to see how he was. Camillus said to them: "The Cardinal is very good to me, and I cannot promise to do anything in return for him here, for my life will soon be over; but if the Lord permits me to see Him face to face, then will I remember to pray for his Eminence."

The next night he spent in uninterrupted meditation on the passion, with his eyes fixed on the crucifix painted in his picture. Then he asked for the picture to be brought to him, and he kissed over and over again, first one and then another of the personages there depicted, speaking to them with words full of love. To the crucifix he said: "O Lord, I recommend to Thee my soul which Thou hast

purchased with Thy precious blood." To the Madonna: "Ah, mother of mercy, by the constancy that thou didst show when thou stoodest under the cross and sawest thy Son crucified and dead, procure for me the grace to save my soul." Then he embraced the whole picture and again kissed the crucifix; he kissed the feet of the Madonna, he kissed St. Michael and all the angels. Then he turned to the Eternal Father: "O Eternal Father, behold Thy most holy Son; I pray Thee by His precious blood to pardon me and to save my sinful soul." Thus did the holy Father employ all his faculties in making a perfect sacrifice of the short remainder of his life.

The same night he was talking with the Father who was sitting up with him and said: "I wonder whether these Fathers have made any provision for reciting the office of the dead for me?" And when he was told that they had spoken on the subject, Camillus said: "You see, it will be to-morrow." And so it was, for on that Monday evening he died.

On the Monday morning, the last morning that he was alive, he had another visit from Cardinal Ginnasi, to whom he recommended his order. Then hearing the clock strike, he asked what hour it was, and being told that it was eight o'clock, he said: "Is it then so late, and no preparations for saying Mass? and yet there are no more Masses for me; this is the last that I shall hear."

The Mass was celebrated on the altar of the infirmary, as was done daily, and while the creed was being said, and particularly from the words "Suffered under Pontius Pilate", to "From thence He shall come", which suggested to him the subject of our Lord's bitter passion, he moved his head in a way that showed he was attending.

When the priest came to the first memento, he cried out in a voice full of fear: "Pray, pray now that the Lord

may save me," so that all who heard him were amazed. At the elevation he beat his breast and called out as loud as he could: "O Lord, have mercy upon me by Thy most precious blood."

He begged the confessor not to leave his bedside, that he might accuse himself of any imperfection that might come into his head. The rest of the day he spent in edifying and touching discourse.

He besought every one who came to see him to recommend him to God, and to his dear friend Francesco Botelli he said: "Pray God for me this evening." When his doctor, Tomaso Condopoli, asked him how he felt, he said: "I expect that the Lord will soon call me." And not long afterwards, when another doctor, Ambrogio Galliano, a great admirer of him, came to see him, he said: "Ah, Signor Galliano, there is another doctor waiting for me."

One of our religious came unexpectedly into the room and found Camillus with his eyes fixed on his picture and countenance showing that he was engaged in sweet meditation, but finding that he was observed, he immediately ceased.

When it struck twelve, he saluted the most holy Virgin with the Ave Maria, although his mouth was so dry that he could hardly move his tongue. Another time he heard the clock strike and asked what hour it was, and when he was told that it was three, he exclaimed: "How slowly the time passes," showing how he desired the evening to come when he should be released from the body and go to rest in heaven with Christ.

He wished his bed to be surrounded with priests, who should continually recite psalms and prayers for him. He responded correctly to the litanies and the other prayers for the recommendation of a soul; and as the confessor

who was assisting him in this last office was sparing in holy water, he called out: "More water, more water." The priest therefore made the sign of the cross on his forehead with the aspersorium, and this contented him: "Ah, that will do," said he.

It was wonderful and most consoling to see how attentive he was to everything that concerned his salvation and how assiduously he kissed the crucifix which he held in his hand and the medals that were tied to his arm. Yet though his heart was so fervent and so united to his Lord, he once complained that he was cold, icy, and without a spark of devotion.

He had his senses to the last, as he had often prayed that he might, and pronounced the evening "Ave" distinctly. About an hour and a half afterwards the infirmarian asked him whether he would take something to refresh him: "Wait a quarter of an hour, then I shall be refreshed," he answered, and so it was, for about a quarter of an hour afterwards he stretched out his arms in the form of a cross, and with the words Most Precious Blood, the name of Jesus, and the name of Mary, in his heart and on his lips, blessing the Holy Trinity and the Archangel St. Michael, he expired just as the assistants were saying the words: "Mild and pleasant may the aspect of Jesus Christ appear to thee," in the presence of all our religious, who were overcome with weeping and were praying that he might have a happy and holy death.

His countenance was cheerful, his eyes lifted up to heaven, he died without a shudder or the slightest change of countenance; but, on the contrary, with a face beaming and radiant did he resign his soul into the hands of his Creator. He died on Monday evening, the feast of St. Bonaventure, at half past ten o'clock, in the year 1614, at the age of sixty-five years, one month, and twenty days;

forty years after his conversion, twenty-eight after Sixtus V had approved his congregation, and twenty-three after Gregory XIV had erected it into an order.

CHAPTER TWENTY

The Body of the Saint Visited by Crowds of People — His Burial

Our religious, when they looked on the cold remains of their great founder, gave way to their sorrow and wept as though their light was extinguished, their guide was lost, and the strong walls of their order broken down. But the sorrow was not confined to his own children, for it was publicly proclaimed in the city: "The Father of the poor is dead: the poor will have reason enough to mourn for his loss."

Fra. Domenico, the discalced Carmelite, a great servant of God, said to one of our Fathers: "A great champion of heaven is dead — of him we may use St. Paul's words: 'The Lord made him an efficient minister of the New Covenant!'"

Many other religious told our Fathers that they did not know whether to congratulate them or condole with them, for though they had lost a good Father on earth, they had gained a powerful advocate in heaven. Every one that mentioned him praised him.

The next morning the body was taken into the church, dressed in priest's vestments, for Mass and Office to be said, and it appeared as if the whole city had come to see him. "Let us go and see the Saint, let us go and see the Saint," said they; the church was crowded with

persons of every kind, who pushed each other about and pressed up to the body to kiss the hands, the feet, and the face, to touch it with their rosaries, with handkerchiefs, with flowers; they took the rings off their fingers and put them on those of the body.

The evergreens and bay leaves with which the body was covered, were soon carried off and had to be replaced often and often; for if the people had not had these things to take away, they would have infallibly cut up the vestments and carried them off piecemeal. Some went even so far as to pull the hairs out of his head.

Many priests when they kissed his hands were heard to say: "O blessed hands, encrusted with charity." A Spanish gentleman who kissed his hands declared that they were as flexible and delicate as those of a Saint who had lately died in Spain.

Multitudes, both men and women, declared that they felt their devotion excited by simply looking at him, and that they should never be satisfied with gazing on the holiness that seemed to radiate from his countenance. The blind people who sat begging at the gate composed a prayer in honor of the servant of God, in which they praised his charity and called him blessed, and then kept reciting it aloud.

But the most remarkable circumstance was the number of possessed persons, both men and women, who filled the air with their shrieks and declared many circumstances relating to the servant of God. Some of them would not approach the bier; others shut their eyes and would not look at him; all of them declared that the sight of him seemed to burn them and torment them; one of them, when they begged him to go near the bier, said that he would rather go to prison. Another said: "Why do you

want me to go near this old fellow, who has just gone to Paradise?"

The Fathers had made no preparation for all this concourse, and as all the rails in the church were broken, and even the framework of the bier, in order to prevent any more disorders, they removed the body as soon as they could into the sacristy. As soon as their determination was known, the crowd increased so that they were obliged to send for a guard of soldiers. After the removal of the body into the sacristy, a possessed person who had climbed up to the window to look in at it suddenly fell backwards as soon as he saw it.

On the third day he was placed in three coffins, two of cypress and one of lead, and buried in the church of St. Maria Maddalena, close to the high altar, on the Gospel side. The place where he lay was distinguished by a simple cross cut in the pavement, without any inscription. When he was put into the coffin, he was still quite supple and pliable. The wound in his leg had lost all its disgusting appearance and looked simply like a large scar. The modesty of his grave did not prevent people from coming to pay their devotions there, and their piety was rewarded by many miraculous graces.

On the eleventh day after his funeral the faithful began to make votive offerings to him, and the first that was given was a silver leg, as if the first cure that our Lord granted, through his intercession, was of that part which had so exercised his patience during his life.

The sacred body lay in this lowly grave for ten years, and in the jubilee of 1625 it was taken up on the 8th of May, to make the legal recognition, on the introduction of the cause of his canonization. It was found quite fresh and perfect, like a living body, and a surgeon who was there felt moved to make an incision into the side, from

which there came forth a great quantity of liquid with a most fragrant smell; this did not cease to flow for the six days during which he was exposed to the veneration of the faithful. He was then placed within a tomb of brick, adorned with stuccoes and carvings; and at the time of his beatification he was removed to the beautiful new chapel that was built in his honor, where his relics are still preserved in an urn of precious marble, within another of gilt metal ornamented with silver.

The faithful came in great numbers to venerate the Saint, and graces are continually dispensed by his intercession. On this occasion a great many relics were taken from his bones, which are now dispersed throughout the Catholic world, and among the rest the bone of the leg on which he had for forty-six years borne the painful wound, of which we have so often spoken. It was completely carious and perforated, from the acrid humors that were caused by the wound, as may be still seen, for it is exposed every year on the feast of the Saint on the high altar for the veneration of the faithful; and it is a fit cause for wonder how the Saint could for so long a time have endured the pain it must have caused him with such marvelous fortitude and patience.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Apparitions of St. Camillus after His Death

On the night of his death our Saint appeared in glory to a certain penitent in Rome and reminded him of a sin which he had forgotten to confess, adding at the same time: "I have just died and am going to Paradise." The gentleman at once got up and hastened to our house, and finding the vision to be true, he at once confessed his sin.

After he was buried, a very holy person, named Sebastiana, aged eighty-five years, after praying at his tomb, declared that for fifteen days she had heard sweet children's voices singing the Psalm: "Sing to the Lord a new canticle, let His praise be in the church of the saints" (Ps. 149:1). The same person said that the Saint had appeared to her in the dress of his order, spangled over with stars, which he said signified the souls that had been saved by his means.

At the same time a Spanish priest, named D. Girolamo, who was suffering from a very violent intermittent fever, appealed to St. Camillus and said to him with faith and devotion: "O holy Father, if it is true that you are in heaven and enjoying the beatific vision, obtain my cure." It was broad day, and he saw plainly a tall old man with a beautiful countenance come to him and say: "I am Camillus, what do you want?" But the priest seeing that he was in white, whereas the dress of his order was black, and that there were with him four shorter persons also in white, replied: "How can you be F. Camillus, for the dress of your order is black, not white?" Camillus answered: "Do not ask this, but tell me what you want." The priest replied: "Father, if it is true that you are in heaven, as all Rome believes, obtain my cure; and I promise, to go to your sepulcher and say a Mass in your honor, and make an offering of silver." "Do as you have promised," said Camillus, and disappeared, leaving the priest quite well and without a vestige of his fever. He went punctually to the church of the Maddalena to say his Mass, but he put off for five days the purchase of the silver offering, when he declared that the Saint sent him a violent headache to reprove his negligence, which left him directly he set out to go to the silversmith to obtain it.

A short time after this a religious of our order in Milan was troubled with very bad thoughts, which he resisted with all his might, but still the devil did not cease from tormenting and disturbing him. One night after a most violent assault he had just fallen asleep, when he felt some one pulling his right arm — he sat up in his bed and saw his room full of a brilliant light, and in the midst of it St. Charles in his cardinal's robes and our holy Father in white robes, with a stole crossed over his breast, and their heads crowned with crowns of stars: the religious said at once: "St. Charles, pray for me;" and then turning to Camillus: "And you, blessed Camillus, as I believe that you are in glory, pray for me that I may be a good religious." The vision disappeared, and thenceforth he was delivered from the temptation.

In Bologna there was a religious who was an acquaintance of the Saint, who was living an evil life and yet frequenting the sacraments. One night Camillus appeared to him and rebuked him sharply; he was frightened, and resolved to make a good confession, and then went to sleep again. Camillus appeared to him a second time and cried out with so terrible a voice that the man was quite frightened, jumped out of bed, and knelt down, and vowed that if God would grant him life till the next morning, he would immediately confess and change his life. This vow he punctually fulfilled.

Giacomo Via of Genoa used to recite every morning a Pater and an Ave, and invoke the patronage of St. Camillus. One day as he was praying, a thought struck him that he would leave off this pious custom, as he did not know that Camillus was not a simple religious like other people. The night after, Camillus appeared to him, in company with others of his order, but much more majestic and splendid than they, and said: "Why do you fear to

recommend yourself to me?" Giacomo never afterwards omitted to invoke his patronage.

Again he appeared to a religious of our order, who was tormented with scruples, and delivered him from all his doubts.

Also to a priest of our order in Florence, who was tempted to leave it, he appeared in a white habit, and made the sign of the cross on his forehead, saying to him: "Doubt not." The priest threw aside his temptation and resolved to resist all the suggestions of the adversary; he declared that for a long time he felt the weight of the cross that Camillus had marked on his forehead.



ST. CAMILLUS DE LELLIS

BOOK III

CHAPTER ONE

The Eminent Faith of St. Camillus

In the two preceding books we have followed the thread of the Life of St. Camillus without interruption. We will now return as gleaners to the field that we have reaped, and collect many interesting details of his virtues and heroic actions.

The first of the theological virtues, and the root and foundation of all the others, is faith. Camillus was gifted with a wonderfully clear vision in matters of faith, so that from the time of his conversion he had a most lively apprehension of God and of all His attributes; he was especially penetrated with His infinite goodness, providence, and mercy, and was never tired of blessing and thanking Him for having caused him to be born in the bosom of Holy Church, for having borne with him up to the time of his repentance, and for having granted him a sovereign hatred for sin. He used often to cry out: "O Lord, how much do I owe you, how much am I obliged to you: and woe to me, a sinner, if I do not see and acknowledge such kindness!"

He was so desirous of bearing witness to the truth of our holy Catholic religion in the face of the world, that he wished for an occasion of shedding his blood for it; and he used to say: "The life which we have received from God we ought to spend for God. I would quite willingly shed my blood for the love of God, and would give a thousand lives, if I had them, for Him and His faith. I feel quite jealous of those who shed their blood for Jesus Christ and for the Catholic faith."

He often reminded his companions of this maxim and proposed to them the example of the Jesuits and other missionaries, who risked their lives for the faith. "As the Jesuits and other missionaries," said he, "labor in India, and go so far as to shed their blood for the conversion of the infidels to our holy faith; so ought we to do for the infidels who come into the hospitals, which are our Indies." This zeal of his converted many heretics, Jews, and infidels, as we shall have occasion to relate farther on.

As he saw that it was not God's will that he should go into the pagan countries and suffer a bloody martyrdom, as he wished, he endured a slower and bloodless martyrdom in his constant service of the sick, without caring for his painful leg and the other diseases that had wasted his poor body. He often prayed for light that he might be able to convert heretics, and he seemed to have nothing so much at heart as the propagation of the faith of Jesus Christ.

For this reason he used every means that his occupations allowed to instruct the ignorant. When he found that the children and the country people at Bocchianico were grossly ignorant of the mysteries of religion, he employed himself most zealously in instructing them. He used to go in procession with them, reciting the Pater, Ave, Credo, and Litanies, and to distribute medals and pictures to them. He used also to send some of his religious to do the same thing in the surrounding villages, and he often said that on this subject God had favored him with a plain indication of His will.

In the hospitals his first care was, that his religious should instruct the sick in Christian Doctrine, and he often went among them and instructed them, and he spoke of the mysteries with such clearness and ease that he seemed a most learned theologian. Indeed, God had favored him

with such clearness of vision that when he used to hear the confessions of his companions, if any of us confessed any thought or temptation against the faith, he related such apposite examples and gave such beautiful instructions on the very highest mysteries that our consciences were set at rest and we were fully satisfied.

Here we may relate the devotion and tenderness which he felt to the Blessed Sacrament. When it was carried through the hospital, he followed it, making short and fervent exhortations, to stir up in those who were to go to Communion a love for that Heavenly Bread. Once he said: "O my brethren, detach your hearts from the filth of this earth and all the world; He it is who gave us our being, who was Incarnate and died for us, who has prepared Paradise for us if we are good, and hell if we are bad. So put yourselves in a state of grace and take care that you receive Him not in sin, for fear He should make the earth open and swallow you up." While the priest was elevating the Host or was saying, "Ecce Agnus Dei," Camillus knelt down before his God, and full of faith cried out with a loud voice: "Behold, O brothers, your salvation. Behold, O ye poor, your riches — Come forth to meet the Lord of Heaven, who deigns to come to you in these impure places, to make peace with your souls: ask Him to pardon your faults. This is He whom you have so often offended; and be sure, that if you ask Him to pardon you with true penitent hearts and with minds determined never to offend Him again, He will doubtless pardon you. Doubt not, for although it is bread to your taste, bread to your sight, bread to your touch, yet it is not in any way material bread, but under these sacred species there is the true Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ, the Son of God, who was born of the Virgin Mary, and who is to come to judge us. Adore Him, then, with all your heart; mourn

bitterly for your sins. Pray Him to pardon you and to save you and make you saints."

And as the priest went round to give Communion to the sick, Camillus followed him on his knees, with a lighted candle in his hand, adoring his God, and discoursing in this way on the things of heaven. During this time of the Communion he caused motets to be sung, accompanied by the organ, and he invited many seculars to attend with lighted candles to do honor to the function.

When the Blessed Sacrament was carried round the hospital, Camillus seemed to forget that he was general of an order, and went before it like a lay brother or a simple cleric, with the holy water in one hand and ringing a bell with the other; at the same time exhorting the sick and raising in them sentiments of faith, piety, and fervent love.

Another proof of his heroic faith may be drawn from the attachment which he always displayed to the Holy See and to the Popes. He venerated all their bulls and decrees and would never allow anything to be said in his presence which tended to call in question their authority; and in his rules and constitutions he enjoined the same respect on his religious.

In helping the sick and dying to make the protestations, he chiefly insisted on this, as the foundation of all the rest, that they wished to live and die in the Holy Catholic Faith, and to believe all that the holy Church believes and teaches and that the Roman Pontiff may propose to be believed, making them undoubtedly confess that they believed the Pope to be the successor of St. Peter and the true Vicar of Jesus Christ.

He felt most violent emotion whenever he thought how universally ignorant the world was on matters of faith and of eternal life; and so, on every opportunity

that presented itself to him, and especially in the hospitals, he instructed those who required it, in the eternal truths, with so much power and success, that all who heard him embraced an exemplary and Christian life.

The faith of Camillus was likewise shown in the aversion which he always had for infidels. So that when he had occasion to speak of the heresies that were then so widely spread in France, Germany, and England, especially against the obedience due to the Holy See and the Roman Church, he would lift up his eyes to heaven and cry out with tears: "Is it possible that men should be so blind and not see the truth of our faith? Can there be men so wanting in understanding and judgment and so blinded by passion as not to be able to distinguish light from darkness, but leave the fountain of living waters and drink muddy water? O Lord, how wonderful is Thy patience in allowing such apostates to live on the earth!"

His aversion to heretics and infidels was so great that he seemed to know them by their smell. Thus, when he was once traveling from Milan with a large company on horseback, he conversed freely with all but one, who he said smelt like a heretic; and so indeed the man turned out to be. He remembered the counsel of St. John, not even to salute or eat with infidels, and so would have nothing to do with them or with Jews, especially with those who showed no respect at all for our religion.

He was once traveling in Lombardy when he observed that one of the passengers turned away his eyes, so as not to look at the crucifix which hung upon his breast. From this Camillus judged him to be a Jew. Considering the disrespect thus shown to our Lord, he was so much moved that he placed his crucifix before the man's eyes, using every endeavor to make him look at it; and when he resisted, Camillus ordered him instantly to leave the car-

riage; and although he was somewhat softened by the prayers of the other travelers, yet he could not sufficiently restrain his zeal to prevent his exclaiming in a tone of thunder: "Perfidious and obstinate man, how dare you to refuse to look at the most holy crucifix? Did not the fear of God restrain me, I would this moment throw you into the ditch by the roadside." The Jew was frightened at his voice, and unable to endure Camillus's presence, who continued to hold the holy image before him, he left the carriage and went away.

He had often pressed the people of Bocchianico to observe the feast days; but seeing that they paid no attention, but worked as usual on these holy days, he went into the church of St. Francesco, and stamping with all his strength on the pavement, he cried out with a terrible voice: "O ye dead who lie in these graves, since this unbelieving people despises my words, rise up and come to bear your witness to them, whether I speak truly when I say that in the next world there is a heaven and there is a hell; heaven for the good, and hell for sinners and those who obey not God's holy commandments." The people were frightened, and from that time forth observed the precept of keeping holy the festival days.

However harsh Camillus was to obstinate heretics and infidels, he was, on the contrary, all gentleness and love towards those who were reasonable and anxious to learn the truth. In this way he converted many. For instance, he converted some Mahometan galley-slaves at Messina. Again, in the hospital at Milan he induced a Lutheran to abjure his heresy and to receive the sacraments; this man died with the most evident signs of salvation.

Thus also, in the hospital of the Annunziata, at Naples, he found a person in his agony, and asked him whether he had confessed, and although the sick man

answered yes, yet Camillus was not satisfied, and he questioned him so closely that a sick man who occupied the next bed, wondering at his perseverance, disclosed to him that the dying man was a Turk, who had indeed confessed and communicated, but only for the purpose of being admitted into the hospital. Camillus, on this, addressed him with such success that the poor man demanded baptism and the sacraments. He survived nine hours and died in the arms of Camillus, cursing Mahomet, and invoking the names of Jesus and Mary.

A still more remarkable event occurred in the hospital at Milan. Camillus went there one day and walked straight up to the beds of two wounded Englishmen, who were lying near one another, and addressed them thus: "How could you, my brethren, friends and companions as you are, come to quarrels and wound one another? And, my brethren, why do you not resolve to believe that which our holy mother the Roman Catholic Church believes, and not remain obstinate against so plain a truth? The wounded men were astonished, for they knew that Camillus had no human means of knowing that they were friends and had wounded one another, so they attended to his instructions and embraced the Catholic faith.

So again, in the hospital of St. Spirito, at Rome, a Lutheran was so moved by his exhortations that he called him to him and told him that he was a Protestant and had only received the sacraments in order to be admitted into the hospital, but that now he wished to be reconciled to the Church and to profess the Catholic faith. Camillus assisted him and remained with him till he died.

In the same hospital there was another heretic, who denied the power of the sacraments. Camillus converted

him by his arguments and his mildness and induced him to retract his error, and then obtained leave from the commissary of the inquisition to absolve him.

Again, as he was going from Bologna to Ferrara, there was a Jew in the boat, who was so struck by the spiritual conversation of Camillus that he knelt down with the rest of us to say the evening Ave, and crossed himself, and, in short, was converted. This I was myself a witness to.

Sometimes when he recited the Creed in Mass, the movements of his body gave evidence of the heartiness of his assent to it. Indeed, it only animated him to undertake works that seemed far too great for him. Faith drove him to combat heresy and confute errors. Faith had so cleared his intellect and given him such a deep insight into its mysteries that he spoke of them like a profound theologian, though, in truth, he had given but little time to these studies. Faith made him always sharply rebuke swearers, even at his own personal peril. Faith made him hate the sophists and heretics who denied the immortality of the soul, purgatory, the eternity of hell, and heaven. "Poor wretches," he would say of them, "now they are trying by experience whether there is a hell and a heaven."

In short, nothing but martyrdom was wanting to prove Camillus to be a confessor of Christ, and although he was not a martyr in deed, yet he was so in the wish and desire he always had to shed his blood in testimony of the holy Catholic Apostolic Roman Faith.

CHAPTER TWO

*The Great Hope That Camillus Had of Being Saved by
the Merits and Blood of Jesus Christ*

Camillus knew perfectly well, and confessed, that he could only hope to save his soul through the merits of Jesus Christ, in the first place, and in the second, by the good works that he should be enabled by God's grace to perform. Yet he had so low an idea of himself and his works, as being mixed up with so many negligences and defects, that he entirely forgot them and put his whole trust in the mercy of God and in the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Hence, his peculiar devotion to this sacred blood, the name of which was always on his lips and in his heart; often would he lift his eyes towards heaven and say: "Lord, Thy blood must save me."

Again, he would often exclaim: "Indeed, I am a great sinner, and a firebrand of hell; but, at all events, I hope in the blood of Christ, that He will be merciful to me and save me!"

One of his most frequent sayings was this: "Every Christian, like St. Hilarion, ought only to remember his good works when he is agitated and tossed with storms, and tempted with cowardice and despair; otherwise he must place all his hope in the infinite goodness of our Lord, and presume nothing on himself, but give to Him all the honor and the glory."

And that which he recommended to others, he practiced himself with such success that, although the devil often tormented him with scruples, tempted him with distrust, and troubled him with anxieties and fears, yet he never allowed himself to be cast down, but in the

midst of his greatest anguish he would turn himself, full of faith, to our Lord and remind Him of the glorious things which He has promised to those who perform works of mercy for the sick, and with this hope he would become calm and composed.

These promises inspired him with such a hope of salvation that when the sermon on the judgment, which used to be preached on the first Monday in Lent, came round, he used to say to his religious: "Come, my brethren, and hear the reward which God promises to the good ministers of the sick." He had, moreover, such a strong impression that he was the greatest sinner in the world, that he considered it a miracle of Divine Goodness that his sins had been pardoned, and that it would be a most lenient punishment if he had to bear the pains of purgatory till the day of judgment.

He really felt all this; but when he turned his thoughts to the precious blood of Jesus Christ, such hope would spring up in him that he would declare that it was impossible that God's mercy and pity should ever be conquered by the wickedness of the most enormous sinner, and that he therefore felt sure that he should be saved by the power of that blood and should be allowed to go straight to heaven.

It was this hope that made him such a tyrant to his own body, which he chastised by allowing it no rest day or night from the service of the sick; and if he was entreated to take a little more care of himself, he would answer: "I care very little for bodily evils, for when this my earthly tabernacle is broken and destroyed, I shall gain another, immortal and eternal."

The hope that he placed in God and in His infinite mercy gave him that strength of mind and heroic courage which enabled him to resist all the troubles that came

upon him, especially at the time of the foundation of his congregation. He was strengthened with a firm hope that God would assist him against his spiteful enemy the devil, and enable him to finish the work which he had begun for His glory, and thus he persevered till he saw it perfectly established.

Thus it was that in all those necessities which so frequently came upon him in the beginning of his congregation, he was never hopeless or desponding, but always had recourse to prayer; and he was never disappointed in his hope, for God always answered his prayer, though it required a miracle.

Thus it once happened in Rome that he was in great want of money, and had nothing to procure food for his forty religious; so he told them all to pray and to hope in God, who would provide for them; and so it was, for the next morning he met accidentally a gentleman of Genoa, close to St. Giovanni de' Fiorentini, who, without Camillus's saying a word, put into his hand more than a hundred scudi, telling him: "I know your difficulties; take this money, and if in time you have enough, you can repay me; if not, I do not care to have it back." Nor would he receive any written acknowledgment, though the Saint wished to give one. Nor was this a solitary instance. Whenever he was in difficulties, he turned with full confidence to God, and was always helped.

Thus it happened at Rome in the year 1591, when, in consequence of the scarcity, our Fathers were in great want of bread, having none in the house, nor any money with which to buy it. Camillus seeing them all disheartened, rebuked them as men of little faith, who could not trust in God; while he was saying these words a sack of flour arrived, which was sent by Fermo Calvi,

and a few days afterwards Cardinal Salviati sent five sacks of grain.

When he had to assist the poor or the sick, Camillus took no thought, but deprived himself of everything, stripped the house of even the most necessary things, and went so far as to contract debts, saying that he hoped in God, who would never fail to keep His promises.

Thus in the scarcity of 1591, besides the large sums of money he gave away, he often distributed all the flour there was in the house; and, lastly, he gave away five hundred ducats, which was the whole provision for the house of the Maddalena; and when some of his religious blamed him for so impoverishing the house, Camillus answered: "I trust in God that He will never fail to help His servants." And so it was, for during the whole time of the famine the house of the Maddalena was always well supplied.

Besides the instance already related, it once happened in Naples that when a lay brother asked him for some money for the sick belonging to the house, Camillus showed him the purse empty, but told him to have confidence in God and go and pray the Lord to provide for us. A little while afterwards he called him back and took out from the empty purse as much money as was wanted, to the great astonishment of the brother. "Another time," he said, "have more faith, and hope in God, and fear not that He will fail His servants." Many other facts of the same sort are recorded in different parts of his Life.

The hope of obtaining eternal life was so firm in Camillus that his thoughts were always fixed on death, and all that the world could give or promise had little or no attraction for him; all his thoughts were turned to the shortness of the present life and the eternity of the

next; hence he put no trust in the favor of the great, and never lost his time in visiting their palaces.

Once when he was asked by one of his religious, after he had resigned the generalship, why he did not sometimes visit the Cardinal Protector, or Cardinals del Monte, Lante, and Crescenzi, who were very partial to him, or the Pope's nephews, who had great influence, to get them to patronize the order, he answered: "My Father, Camillus has no time to attend to these visits; Camillus has his spurs on his heels and is expecting from hour to hour the summons to appear before the tribunal of God; and therefore we must put all our hope and direct all our thoughts to heaven."

One day a prelate, an intimate friend of his, met him in the streets of Rome: "O my dear Father," said he, "what a time it is since I have seen you. How goes it with you?" Camillus, whose heart and mind were in another world, answered: "Most reverend Monsignor, we are old and must be traveling up that way," lifting up his hand to heaven. At these words the prelate was quite melted; he embraced him affectionately and said: "It is true," and departed from him with his eyes full of tears and his heart full of compunction.

This continual meditation on death not only made him hope ardently for heaven, but encouraged him to increase his labors every day, and made him find all his pleasure in the hospitals, so that he lived quite contented in the midst of all their misery and filth, because in the persons of the poor he was serving that God from whom alone he hoped for the recompense promised to merciful men, who recognize Jesus Christ in His poor.

Moreover, he wished other people to regulate their lives by the thought of death and to place all their hope in the good things of the next world; to this end he

would say very often: "In the next life we must either enjoy an eternity of happiness or suffer an eternity of woe."

Once when he went, in order to get a little fresh air, to a vineyard near Rome, where there were more than forty laborers at work, Camillus called them together and made them a most sweet address, concluding as follows: "Look up there, my brethren, remember that in heaven there are no spades and shovels; nothing but eternal life and eternal rest; so think of death and place all your hopes up there and take care always to live in the grace of God."

Another interesting occurrence took place in the hospital of St. Spirito. Camillus wished to make the bed of a sick man, who was so weak and old that he was very slow in rising up: "When I was stronger," said he, "and a soldier, I danced in a different style;" and then he went on to relate his deeds of daring, and the wars in which he had been engaged, and the places in Flanders that had been taken in his time, and how he had been the first to mount the breach at Antwerp, and other military feats of his. Camillus listened to him with great patience and did not interrupt him; but when the old man stopped to take breath: "Come," said he, with great gentleness, "come, my brother, now you are old you have no other feat to accomplish but to go through the dance of death, from here below to the place up there," pointing first to the earth and then to the heaven: he went on to talk of this "leap," and warned him that he must soon die, and exhorted him to lay in a stock of good works and to be well prepared, and concluded by telling him that it was great folly to set out upon such a long journey without the provisions of holy and virtuous works. The old man was touched by these words,

made his confession, and began from that time to think more seriously about obtaining heaven.

Camillus practiced what he taught others, and he used to say that he lived in the world as in an inn, where a man lodges for the night and departs next morning. Every now and then he would stand and contemplate a dead body or a dying man, and would learn from them the important lesson which the last misery of man teaches; sometimes he would go for the same purpose to the cemeteries, to see the dead bodies buried.

He let no opportunity go by without reminding himself and others of the thought of death, or without urging people to wean themselves from the earth and to lay up their hope in heaven.

While he had the care of the hospital in the Via delle Carozze, Cardinal Cusano came to visit it. Camillus showed him the rooms, the kitchen, the dispensary, and the wardrobe, and took him by degrees to the dead-room, where there were at least fourteen dead bodies. The Cardinal was horrified, and his heart failed him at this sad sight: not so Camillus, who used these dead bodies as books, from which he learned to despise all visible goods and to esteem only those eternal goods which Christian hope assures to us.

His loving confidence in the merits of Jesus Christ was never divided from a great fear of God's judgments. Once in particular it seized him with such violence that he was heard to say with sighs, "Who can tell what will become of me? Who can tell whether I shall be saved?" And from that time he observed a more rigorous silence, for fear of offending God in any matter, however slight.

While he was living in the hospital, his companion one day observed that he was paler than usual, and asked him how it was. Camillus answered: "If men considered

well the approach of death, they would certainly never talk; when I think of it, I am all in a tremble;" but then he regained his confidence and exclaimed: "O Lord, what will become of me? Thy blood must save me."

On every fitting occasion he spoke of the four last things; and when he was assisting a dying person, if there were others in the room, he would urge them to reflect on the fearful sight, and would make them a short sermon upon death and upon the most minute account that we shall have to give to God after death; he would conclude by exhorting them to fly from sin and to meditate upon eternity.

Indeed, we may affirm that our holy Father lived as though the sickle of death were always at his feet and the trumpet of judgment sounding in his ears. He was in the world, but not of it; his mind was more in heaven than on earth, and he could say with St. Paul: "Conversatio nostra in cœlis est."

CHAPTER THREE

Camillus's Ardent Charity towards God and towards the Souls of His Neighbors

The whole life of St. Camillus, from the moment of his conversion to that of his death, was a continual exercise of charity towards God and towards his neighbor, and all his deeds related in this history may be well called a proof of his ardent love of God. Yet we will here collect together some of the facts recorded in the processes, which belong more particularly to the virtue of charity; thus we shall have a more exact account of his heroic virtues, and my readers will be more satisfied with the

great number of splendid examples of charity which they will find collected together in this chapter.

From the happy moment when he was called to the true knowledge of God, his soul was always lighted up with such a fire of love that he always loved God above all things and his neighbor for God's sake. He found his own heart too narrow, and desired to have a larger one, that he might love God infinitely, and he used to say that it was no presumption, or at any rate, a laudable presumption, to desire to love more than the angels and seraphim.

He was always striving, by every means, to enlarge this flame of love, by sighs, by fervent ejaculations, by repeated acts of charity and of contrition, with thanksgivings and heroic resolutions, and with acts of fervent desire of suffering, and even of being entirely sacrificed as a holocaust of love. He performed these acts with such intensity of devotion that he was carried away in ecstasy, so that rays of light proceeded from his countenance, as from the sun: thus it was, in Naples, when he was once discoursing to his religious on the beauty of purity; and again, in Rome, while he was talking about charity with Father Zazzera, the disciple of St. Philip; on this occasion the brightness which issued from the countenance of Camillus was reflected on the faces of all who were present.

These ecstasies would surprise him while he was performing other duties, as frequently happened in the hospital of St. Spirito, where he was often seen quite abstracted, with his face lit up and so out of himself that he would jump, and sing versicles expressing his love to God, even while he was performing his offices of charity to the sick. Sometimes while he was feeding them, he would not be able to find their mouth; and one of his

religious attests that he saw him one morning in this state, and called out to him to bring the soup-basin, but it was a long time before Camillus gave any answer, and when his senses returned, he sighed, just like a person awakening from a profound sleep.

Girolamo Mattei, rector of St. Maria del Calvario, attests another fact, which happened in the great hospital of Milan. This priest went to the hospital to invite Camillus to his house; he found him attending to a man in a very bad fever, but while Camillus was giving him something to eat, he was suddenly carried off in an ecstasy, as was evident from his smiling countenance and from his being lifted up from the ground so high that his head struck violently against the curtain-rod, and the cord which held the knob of the canopy was broken, so that the knob fell on the sick man's head and wounded him severely. The noise and cries of the sick man, the confusion and arrival of the surgeon, awoke Camillus from his ecstasy. He was quite confounded at the accident and began weeping; then he embraced the sick man and fell on his knees before him to beg his pardon. The end of it was that, in a few moments, before Camillus went away from the bed, the man was perfectly cured, both of the fever and of the wound, and went away quite well from the hospital that very day.

This divine fire burned strongest in him while he was saying Mass. Then, he was either melted into tears, or he stood motionless and quite out of himself, and this happened especially at the consecration, or his frequent sighs would bear witness to the love he felt in his heart. He recited his office and his other prayers with the same feelings; during the whole time he seemed quite on fire and wrapt up in God.

Here I may relate a fact attested by the person who was with him at the time. He and Camillus went one day into the church of St. Rocco at Rome, and after praying for some time, he looked round and, to his dismay, found that Camillus was not there. He immediately got up and ran after him and at last overtook him, and to his great astonishment found him quite wrapt up in God and perfectly unconscious that he was out of the church and was walking by himself.

Before Mass he always made a long preparation, and after it a longer thanksgiving; but what the affections of his heart were at these times, only the blessed spirit who witnessed them could tell. It only appears by the processes, that he retired into some private place where he could make his preparation and thanksgiving without interruption, where he remained quiet and motionless, often lifting up his eyes to the crucifix. If at such times any one came to speak to him, he made a sign to him to be quiet, and never answered until he had finished.

He wished, moreover, that every one should respect and reverence the priesthood, and he used to say that priests are ministers of God, and His true secretaries; and he would quote the saying of St. Francis, that if an angel were to come to him and then a priest, he would first make a reverence to the priest and afterwards to the angel, on account of the unspeakable dignity of the priesthood; and he would add, that from the respect shown to the servants of a prince, you may see what esteem the prince is held in; so, from the veneration shown to priests, you may gather the love and esteem which men have towards God.

The love which Camillus bore to God produced in him such an intense hatred of sin that he would have allowed himself to be chopped in pieces rather than com-

mit the slightest fault. It also excited in him that thirst for the word of God, which carried him to listen to sermons and discourses as often as he could spare the time; here he would always seat himself on the back benches, although many religious were always looking out for him and reserved a seat for him in the front rank; from these sermons he drew such profit that he used to say: "As food gratifies the palate and feeds and strengthens the limbs, so, hearing God spoken of, gives a wonderful gratification and vigor to the spirit."

As fire does not confine itself to itself, but breaks forth and seizes on everything around it, so the love in Camillus was not content to inflame his own heart, but with insatiable zeal went forth to gain as many souls as possible to God. Hence he often made most fervent discourses, even in the public places of the cities, and excited all who listened to him, so that they generally went away grieving for their sins, and full of fervor and devotion; he would lament bitterly that he had not the tongue of St. Paul, to make all mankind perfectly detest sin and to convert all the world to God.

When he was staying at Bocchianico, he was told that, while he was preaching in the church, there were numbers of people strolling about in the square, talking over their affairs or other useless matters: he immediately went out of church and got up on a piece of broken wall, at some height from the ground, and with his crucifix in his hand he began a new discourse with these words: "As you will not come into church to find me and to hear the word of God, I am determined to come and find you and to play the spiritual mountebank for the good of your souls." He went on with such energy and spirit that a seraph from heaven could not have spoken better on the perfections of God and on the malice of sin, and

his voice was so loud and clear that the multitude which collected around him was deeply affected; he ended by saying that: "As other mountebanks, after they have said all they have to say, try to sell something to the people, so I, now I have finished, will not sell but give you some devotional thing." His whole audience was anxiously waiting to see what this gift might be, when Camillus put his hand into his bosom and drew out a parcel of medals, one of which he distributed to each person. Then he took the paper of indulgences and read and explained it sentence by sentence. And as he doubted whether they would remember it, he had it fixed up against the door of our church, where any one who chose might read it. How well did this zeal atone for the ill-example which Camillus had given in that very same square by his gambling and idle talking!

When he was told that there were many poor girls and other modest women who did not hear Mass on festivals, because they had no decent clothes in which they could show themselves in the principal church, among their equals, the good Father was full of pity, and in his desire to assist those souls, he took with him vestments, chalice, missal, candles, and everything needful, and went to say Mass in some small church, where they were not ashamed to come and fulfil their obligation or receive the sacraments. After Mass he gave them a short sermon and instructed them in various points of Christian doctrine, and especially in the method of making a good confession. And that this kind of charity might be extended to all that had need of it, he kept several priests in the house at Bocchianico, whom he sent on festivals to say Mass in three different churches.

The pains that he took to prevent sin were incredible; he used to say that he would willingly shed his own

blood for the good of souls, if by this means he could deliver them from sin and restore them to the grace of God. He was always striving to persuade persons to love and honor God, and to leave off their easy careless life and give themselves up to the pursuit of virtue.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Charity of Camillus to the Sick in the Hospitals

It is reasonable that we should give the precedence to the acts of charity that Camillus practiced within the hospitals, as these were always the objects of his first care. To form an idea of this charity of his, we have only to behold him busied about the sick, how tender, how loving he was, how forgetful not only of every earthly comfort, but even of himself and of his life.

In the hospitals of Rome, Milan, and Naples, it was the commonest thing to see him take in his arms the sick people while their shirts were changed, and even though they were infected with leprosy or other contagious disorders, he did not excuse himself from taking hold of them most affectionately, and from putting his face close to the sick person's to whisper words of comfort and kindness.

Often, too, was he seen washing with his own hands those who were so filthy that no one else would touch them; he always carried about him some vessels and cups to serve for any emergency; and generally he looked for the worst cases and for those who were nearest dying, and he used every means to make them die in the grace of God. While he was assisting them, he used to feel

quite overcome with compassion, and would willingly have borne all their sufferings in their place.

This tender compassion of his towards the sick arose from his contemplating in them the Person of Jesus Christ. Thus when he was feeding them, he would often kneel down and uncover his head; sometimes he would even ask them for grace and for the pardon of his sins, as though they were so many images of Jesus.

One night his companion found him in the hospital of St. Spirito, on his knees before a sick person who had a gangrene in his mouth, the odor of which was quite unbearable; and yet, Camillus, with his face close to his, kept saying: "My Lord, my soul, what can I do to serve Thee?" and he used other expressions so tender and affectionate that it was easy to perceive that in the person of the poor sick man he imagined himself to be serving his beloved Redeemer.

This holy imagination would carry him off into ecstasy, so that, as we related in the preceding chapter, his face would be all on fire, and he would go leaping and dancing through the hospital without being aware of it. His companion testifies upon oath that he has time and again seen him thus carried off into ecstasy while he was serving the sick, so that we must suppose that his eyes were divinely illuminated to behold in the countenances of the most wretched creatures the lineaments of the King of Glory.

He considered himself the slave of the sick, and assisted them exactly as a servant would assist his master, and wished the poor people not to ask him, but to order him to do what they wanted, as though he had been their slave.

One day a sick man said to him: "Father, may I beg you to make up my bed, it is very hard?" Camillus got almost angry, as if he thought himself aggrieved by having the expression, "may I beg you," used to him, and answered: "God forgive you, brother — you beg me! Don't you know yet that you are to command me, for I am your servant and slave?" And then he began to make up his bed with the greatest possible care.

On another occasion he had brought some food to a sick man covered with sores, and though his manner was most kind, yet the sick man had grown impatient with his disorder and was not altogether satisfied. Camillus on perceiving this was overcome with pity, embraced and caressed him, and said to him with the greatest kindness: "Dear brother, I beseech you for the love of Jesus Christ not to weep and lament any more, for I am here ready to serve you and to do whatever you order me, and be assured that I will not leave you till I see you perfectly satisfied." In this manner he at last succeeded in perfectly satisfying the poor man.

When he took any sick person in his arms to change his linen or to wash him, even though he were the most leprous or infectious person in the hospital, he handled him with as much care and affection as a mother could use to a son. If he had to remove a person from one bed to another, it was beautiful to see what care he took that the cold should not seize him, and that no part of his body should be uncovered, and that his head might not hang down too low. In re-covering any sick man, he used such care that it looked as if he had nothing else in the world to do, so taken up was he in his task: with one hand he held his food, with the other he supported his head or frightened away the flies; his eyes were occupied in watching if he wanted anything; his ears were at-

tentive to hear if he asked for anything, that he might do it instantly; with his tongue he exhorted him to patience, and in his heart he prayed to God that His grace might be granted to him.

After the sick man was fed and made comfortable, he never could tear himself away without being assured that he was quite satisfied and wanted nothing more. Then he gave him the crucifix to kiss, sprinkled him with holy water, and kissed either his hands or his feet; and always recommended himself to his prayers; indeed he used to say: "Would to God that in the hour of my death one sigh or one blessing of these poor creatures may fall upon me!"

He never omitted any act of charity which could alleviate the pain of the sick poor. He gave them water to wash their hands, and when they could not wipe themselves, he wiped them — he shaved them, combed their hair, cut their nails, bandaged their wounds, dressed their sores, cleaned their tongues, and if they were faint bathed their temples and nostrils with rose-water, to revive them. When any of them wanted to get out of bed, he would first put their slippers on their feet and would take off his own cloak and cover them with it.

He did not mind touching their filth, and once in the hospital of the Annunziata, at Naples, he found a sick person who was so diseased that he bred worms, and he was so moved that he lifted up his eyes to heaven and took the pillow, all over worms, from under his head and called the other Fathers to see. Then he kissed the pillow and told them that these would be the pearls and jewels with which the Servants of the Sick would be crowned in Paradise; then with great kindness and care he went on to clean the bed and the poor man himself.

Another time, in the hospital at Florence, he was employed with a novice in cleaning the sick from their filth; the novice, being unused to the work, soiled his hands with it and seemed somewhat mortified. Camillus seeing this, said: "Reckon these as gloves of gold; charity must be performed with a ready mind and a generous heart."

So full was he of this generosity, and so willingly did he give himself up to the service of the sick, that for him, going to the hospital was like going to a delicious and flowery garden. Thus, late one evening, he met Bartolomeo Croce, a physician, and benefactor of our order, who asked him where he was going so late. The Saint answered that he was going to take a walk in a beautiful garden, full of flowers, close to the castle St. Angelo. Bartolomeo wondered at the answer, because he knew that there could be no such garden in that place. Camillus smiled and then went on to explain that he meant the hospital of St. Spirito, and so left his benefactor much edified.

On another occasion he was asked by one of our order whether he liked being in the hospital. He answered with astonishment: "And how could it be otherwise, in such an earthly Paradise, besides the hope and earnest of having also the heavenly one?"

Naturally he was melancholy and sad; but when he was in the hospital he seemed to have changed his nature, and as the sky clears when the clouds are dispersed, so Camillus would put off his dulness and become at once merry and cheerful, communicating to the whole of that holy place the joy which radiated from himself. His coming gladdened not only the lame, the dumb, the deaf, the feverish, and the other poor sick, but even the blind seemed to perceive his approach, for they called him and with the greatest affection saluted him by name. Indeed,

the arrival of the Saint seemed to be the arrival of the angel of the Gospel to stir the waters of the pool, for all hoped to receive some comfort or help from him. Nor were they deceived; for experience proved that his very shadow and his presence, like that of St. Peter, gave refreshment and alleviation of their sufferings to the sick.

Nothing was too small for the attention of Camillus, if only it could afford some alleviation or a little gratification to the sick. Thus he would bring them fruit according to the season, or sugar-plums; and for fear of hurting them by these little dainties, he got eight physicians to make him out a list of the various kinds of food and sweetmeats proper for persons in different diseases, and this list he always carried about with him. For the same purpose he would even become a cook when he wished to prepare any little delicacy that was ordered for them.

He would sometimes perform the office of a nurse and employ himself in feeding the sick children, and such was the tenderness and love which he displayed when thus employed that it looked as if he would have shed his blood to feed them if it had been necessary. Sometimes, when he had nothing more important to do, he wandered from bed to bed with a candle in his hand, and would put the bedclothes over the sick men, or occupy himself in catching the troublesome insects that annoyed them, or place them in a more comfortable position, or wipe their eyes and mouth with a handkerchief.

One morning he found a poor man so dirty that it was enough to make one sick to look at him, and he was so moved at the sight that he ran home and got a large kitchen-pan, a piece of soap, a rough towel, and two or three sprigs of sweet-smelling herbs, and ran back to the hospital. There he had the pan filled with hot water,

put the poor man into it, and washed him from head to foot, and then wiped him and made him perfectly clean. Indeed the care and solicitude of his heart for the poor sick was such that he seemed to think of nothing else, nor could anything else distract him from it.

In the hospitals he used to wear over his cassock a black apron, to keep himself clean; once it happened that Pope Clement VIII, in the beginning of his pontificate, went to visit the hospital. Camillus, without once thinking who it was, immersed as he was in the service of the sick, presented himself to kiss his feet in this apron. The Pope, instead of being offended, was so much edified that he called him aside into another room, talked with him for an hour about the things that the sick people required, and ordered many things to be provided that the experience of Camillus suggested.

Camillus would submit to the most menial offices, if he could do the slightest good to the sick by them. He might be often seen carrying tables, benches, mattresses, or sweeping the floors, wherever there was any dirt, or even emptying and cleansing the very night-stools!

If he took such care of the bodies of the sick, how shall we describe his labors for the good of their souls? When he approached a sick man's bed, the first question he asked was upon the mysteries of the faith, on the Christian doctrine, and whether he had been to confession; and if there were in the hospital any sick foreigners, he used every conceivable plan for making himself understood by them. He spoke to them in all the languages of which he had any knowledge, and would use half Latin, or half Spanish, or half French: nor was the little Greek that he had learned in Slavonia forgotten: and our Lord seemed to bless this holy care and to renew the miracle that we read of in the Acts of the Apostles,

for the poor fellows understood him and gave signs of compunction and conversion when he spoke to them. Often, too, they asked him to hear their confessions, and were quite satisfied.

In summertime he went to the place where a number of sick people used to lie on the bare ground, waiting to have their confessions heard, before they could be provided with beds: he would take his crucifix in his hand and would instruct them how to make a good confession with so loud a voice that the whole hospital echoed as if it were a trumpet sounding to awaken man to penitence. These sermons produced wonderful fruit. Many of the poor fellows declared that they had confessed faults which they had always concealed for shame, through the advice of that old Father who had exhorted them to reveal the truth.

Such was his care that the sacrament of penance should be promptly administered to the sick, that whenever it was asked for, he commanded his religious to leave off any other work of charity they might be engaged in. One day one of our priests was going through the hospital moistening the mouths of those who were thirsty, when Camillus, hearing that a sick man was asking for a confessor, took the vessel of water out of the priest's hands and sent him to console the poor man, telling him that it was a work more pleasing to God to cleanse consciences than to refresh mouths.

He would employ himself the whole day in instructing the ignorant, in catechizing and exhorting them, sometimes making them repeat the Pater noster, the Ave Maria, and other prayers; sometimes teaching them to make acts of faith, hope, and charity, and instructing them in those virtues according to their capacity; sometimes he would paint in glowing colors the enormity of

sin and the miserable effects which it produces in the soul; and then he would set before their eyes the terrible scourges with which God punishes obstinate sinners in hell, or encourages them with the hope and desire of Paradise. How many persons did he in this way bring to repentance! how many did he help to die in the grace of God! How many persons who had not made a perfect confession, and must have perished eternally, have by his means been in their last moments perfectly reconciled! How many dying men, assailed in their agony by grievous temptations to unbelief, hatred, or despair, have been delivered, confirmed, and brought by him to better sentiments! Who could ever enumerate the sick persons that Camillus restored, consoled, and succored, both in soul and body! Who could ever repeat the blessings that these poor afflicted men have showered not only on him, but also on the happy mother who bore him!

It is enough to say that he so sympathized with the sufferings of the sick that he seemed to feel in his own person all their pains, so that he not only wiped away their tears, but also with most affectionate compassion mingled his own with theirs. He was often seen weeping bitterly, and when asked the reason, he answered with sorrow, that it arose from seeing the affliction and the danger of so many poor persons, who in their sickness were in danger of losing not only their life but their soul too.

One day he was standing immersed in grief, with his eyes fixed on a number of poor fellows, who were obliged, as all the beds were full, to lie on a little straw spread on the ground. He was asked why he was so sad, and he answered: "I am eating the bread of affliction, seeing these members of Jesus Christ suffering, when I cannot relieve them."

In fact, we may say that every moment of the life of Camillus was spent in acts of charity to the sick, and that he had no home which he loved so well as the hospital; it was there that he found all his consolation; and if sickness or business kept him at home, he appeared like a prisoner and could think and talk of nothing else but his poor people at the hospital. And that he might not be completely severed from it, instead of keeping for his own service the companion who was appointed to be with him during his long and painful illnesses, he would send him to the hospital every morning and evening to supply his place, telling him to go and assist such a poor man in such a bed, and at the same time sending something to refresh him. When his companion returned, he was never tired of asking him questions; he wanted to know most minutely all about the sick; whether, and what food, they had eaten, whether they had changed their linen; indeed, his questions were such as to show that he no longer lived in himself, but that Jesus Christ and His poor lived in him.

One first of August there was a violent storm, but the rain could not hinder him from walking to the hospital, where he arrived soaked through with the rain. On another occasion, as he was walking to the hospital of St. Spirito, he found, on the bridge of St. Angelo, a poor man lying on the ground, with a crowd of people round him, who had stopped to pity him. Camillus did not stay to look, but took him up in his arms and carried him to the hospital; on the way he passed a door out of which a woman was sweeping clouds of dust; so, Camillus pointing to the poor man with as great reverence as if he had been Christ Himself: "Madam," said he to her, "wait a moment; stay till this poor fellow has passed."

Again, though sometimes, especially at the commencement of the congregation, the affairs about which he had to go to the Vatican were of the utmost importance, and though he was in the greatest hurry for fear of missing the hour appointed for his audience, yet, when he approached St. Spirito, he seemed to forget all he had to do, and could not prevent his going in, and hurrying through some little act of charity for the sick; then he would go on his way with greater joy.

If he was very much pressed for time, he would content himself with touching the beds and saluting the sick; and when he had not time even for this, he still turned a little out of his way and came as near the walls of his beloved hospitals as he could, so as to enjoy the fragrance which (to his taste) came forth from it. For, to him, such smells were perfumes, and perfumes were loathsome as the following will show.

Once he was in Ortona, lodging in the vicar-general's house, and before dinner a towel beautifully perfumed was presented to him to wipe his hands with; but the scent made him quite sick, and he was glad to pass it on to his companion, who could not satisfy himself with smelling at it and cried out: "If scents like these disgust you so much, Father, how can you bear the smell of the hospital?" Camillus answered: "I do not think that there is a flower-bed in the world whose scent would give me such pleasure as the smell of the hospital, which I feel quite refreshing." And we must believe that it was so, for he often said that if he was unwell, or his head ached when he went to the hospital, all pain vanished when he entered, and he felt all his strength and activity return, so that he could work well in the service of the poor.

Once a friend of his begged him not to go to the hospital when the air, scorched by the burning sun, struck upon the bridge of St. Angelo, and this was his answer: "My brother, charity seeks not its own convenience. Is not the sun also God's creature? My brother, we must give the spur to this jade of a body of ours, to make it trot on and get forwards."

Another time one of our priests said to him: "Father, I am afraid that one day you will faint and fall down, and die in the midst of the poor people." And he answered quickly: "Would to God that I might die among the poor fellows. I pray God I may." And then he added: "The good soldier dies in battle, the good sailor on the sea, and the good Servant of the Sick in the hospital."

And he remained in the same mind during the last few months of his life, for while he was in bed, unable to go to the hospital, whenever the hour came for the charity-bell to sound, he was filled with holy envy at those who were able to avail themselves of so good an opportunity of serving God; and though he was exceedingly weak, yet he insisted on getting up, and with the assistance of a lay brother, would go to the house-infirmiry, to do some service for the sick religious.

One evening, though it rained in torrents, he went out to the hospital, only that he might get up in the night and give a fresh egg to a certain sick man, comforting himself with the reflection, that if he did not go and do it, no one else would think of it.

His whole life, moreover, and especially his fervent exhortations, were a complete school of charity. It was impossible to contemplate his motions in the hospital without being at once edified and instructed in some new contrivance for the comfort of the sick.

A good old Florentine, named Domenico, gave up his whole time to preparing plasters. I met him one day with a bunch of ivy in his hand, and he said to me: "I learnt this lesson from your saintly Father Camillus: would to God I may be one of his true disciples and imitators."

Nor must we omit the lesson of heroic charity which Camillus gave during the terrible inundation of the Tiber in the year 1598. The water was so high that the hospital was flooded, and the sick were in danger of being drowned. He therefore called six of his religious, and animating them with his words, and much more by his example, he spent the whole night in removing the sick from their peril and carrying them on his back to a place of safety, and it was a sight at once of wonder and pity to see him halfway up his legs in water and mud, and yet thinking nothing of the pain of his wounded leg, nor of the fatigue inseparable from so laborious a task, but intent solely on delivering the poor people from their danger. This heroic example was not lost on his companions and on those belonging to the hospital, and with their aid all the sick were placed out of danger. And it was providential that they were so, for scarcely were they all removed, when the water rose twelve palms in all the wards; so that it seems almost miraculous that not a single sick person was drowned.

He always managed to have as his companion one of the youngest novices, that he might instruct him by his example and incite him by his words to deeds of charity to the poor, and when he saw any of his religious avoiding the sick or showing signs of disgust at the smell of the hospitals, he would invite him dexterously to help him to make the bed of one of the filthiest patients, and would carefully clean the sick man with his own hands, and

say: "May our Lord give me the grace to die with my hands covered with this holy partage of charity."

One of his religious, who often accompanied him to the hospital of St. Giacomo degli Incurabili, attests that there was there a man whose whole face was eaten up with cancer so fetid and disgusting that he was avoided by all the servants of the hospital; but Camillus would clean him with his own hands, and even kiss him on the face.

He wished the Servants of the Sick always to walk fast to the hospital, that they might have more time to spend here; and he once reproved with holy impatience a lay brother who was his companion and had walked very slowly. When they were come to the hospital, he said: "O brother, what a snails' pace you have walked!"

And who can express the fervor and efficacy of his words whenever he spoke of charity and exhorted his religious to serve the sick! "This is my rest to refresh the weary," he would often repeat, "This is my recreation." These words he said with such spirit that he seemed like an apostle, and whenever he was exhorting a person to any work, his face would show what a fire burned in his heart; and he used often to say that a Servant of the Sick without charity was like a body without a soul.

In his public and private discourses there was nothing that he spoke of more frequently than charity, which he wished to impress upon the hearts of all men; sometimes on these occasions his face would shine as if it had been on fire. Our religious once saw him with this light on his countenance while he was making a public discourse on charity in our house. And some brothers of the Oratory saw a similar occurrence while he was speaking of it in the hospital of St. Spirito.

To inflame his religious with this tender love he would often remind them of the words of Jesus Christ: "I was sick, and you visited me" (Matt., 25:36). And lest he should seem tedious in repeating the same thing so often, he brought forward the example of St. John the Evangelist, who was always repeating these golden words: "My children, love one another;" and then he added: "There can be no doubt but that the great apostle, the secretary of the Most Holy Trinity," so he used to call him, "could have imparted to his disciples many of the beautiful and sublime truths which he had learned on the bosom of the Wisdom of the Father. Yet he was contented to leave them as his legacy and his teaching this one precept, the compendium of the law and of Christian perfection." And then he concluded: "So, my brethren, do not marvel at my telling you so often to be full of mercy and pity, because I am like some country priests, who, they say, cannot read any other book but their missal, so I can speak only on this subject."

Sometimes he would endeavor to arouse his religious to a holy emulation by the example of the number of seculars who employed themselves in the hospitals in works of charity; these he would tell them had come to diminish their profits, and therefore he exhorted them not to remain behind, nor to let themselves be outdone in activity and fervor.

On other occasions he would describe the hospitals as so many gold mines, where they and every one else might make themselves rich for ever.

Once in speaking to one of our priests, he said: "Do you want to know whether you are in conformity with the heart of God and are walking in the way of perfection? Examine yourself and see how you act with regard to the promise which you have made to God, and

then if you find yourself warm in the ministry of our holy Institute, it is a good sign; but if you find yourself cold, it is a bad sign."

In the spiritual conferences which our religious make in common to discuss on virtues, he always spoke about charity, questioning sometimes one, sometimes another, how they would assist the sick, how they would feed them, and what was the best way to make their beds. Sometimes he would make them carry tables, benches, sheets, mattresses, and other things, in the presence of the rest, that he might have an opportunity of testing and improving the activity of each of them.

He made use of these same conferences to examine what they knew about comforting the dying, and suggesting acts of faith, etc.; and he made one of them take the part of the dying man, and another practice as the assistant; and he would say that this was precisely what the study of a Servant of the Sick should consist in, and that in comparison to this, everything else should appear tedious and disagreeable.

In these same conferences he encouraged them to be ready to suffer any insult or injury, or any other annoyance that might happen to them in the exercise of their ministry. In speaking on this subject, he revealed that he often received blows, being spit upon and reviled, and even driven away and threatened; whence he concluded, that to be a useful member of our Institute, it required a fervent spirit, patience to endure every trial, ardent charity, and, above all, the habit of beholding the Creator in His creatures.

When Camillus resigned the office of general, he wrote a circular letter to every house of the order, in which he declared that he gave up the office through the desire of giving himself up more entirely to the service

of God and of the sick; thus teaching by his deeds what he had taught by his words, and he exhorted all the Fathers never to grow weary in the exercise of charity, asking them at the same time to give thanks to God for having given him grace to be able to attend more entirely to the sick, and for having reduced him to a station in which he had the happiness to obey, instead of commanding.

But notwithstanding that he was so earnest in his exhortations to his religious, to endure the labors and sufferings inseparable from the care of assisting the sick, yet he was not over-rigid with others, nay, so far was he from it that, although he never spared himself, yet he was so full of discretion and compassion for his companions that he used every possible means to lighten their burden, even by taking it on himself.

One summer the heat in Rome was extraordinary; Camillus was walking with a novice about noon to the hospital of St. Spirito. In passing over the bridge of St. Angelo, the good Father saw that the novice was suffering very much from the glare of the sun; and having no other way to protect him, he said: "Come up close to me, I am tall, and can overshadow you and keep the sun off." The novice was too modest and respectful to do so, so Camillus commanded him to come under the shadow of that tree of charity, and so considerate was he that he so managed his movements as to prevent any of the sun's rays from falling upon the novice.

He made no account of the weakness of his body, nor of the pain of his wound, but in order to lighten the labors of others, he took more than he could endure on himself, in the way of serving and assisting the poor, so that sometimes he would get up at night in a state of such weakness that he could not stand, and was obliged

to go up and down stairs on his hands and knees and lay hold of the bed-posts to support himself, and when his leg pained him very much, he would stamp two or three times on the ground for mortification; once it was so bad that he fell down, and when a sick man said to him: "Father, go to bed, you are very weak," he answered: "Brother, I am your slave, I must remain here to serve you." And he even put his companions under obedience to go to bed, and he would in their place undertake the whole burden of the night-watches.

Finally, such was the care that he took of the sick, and such was his charity to them, that it was not confined to the time of their sickness, but extended beyond. When they were discharged from the hospital as cured, he did not abandon them, but helped them to get clothes and shoes; and if they were still weak, he gave them his arm or furnished them with a walking-stick. And when he found any one so weak as not to be able to walk, by his prayers and entreaties he would get leave for him to be put into bed again.

He was exceedingly grieved that there was not in every city some institution like that which St. Philip had erected in Rome, where the convalescent might be taken care of, not merely for two or three days, but for two or three weeks, and even more if necessary. He was always talking about the necessity of having such places; proving by experience that many and many a person who had come out of the hospital weak and emaciated, and not having at home proper food and attendance for the first two or three days, had relapsed into the same or worse illnesses, and had returned to the hospital only to die. As he had no means to carry out this design, he was

obliged to content himself with persuading the physicians not to send away the sick immediately the fever was cured, but to allow them to remain till they had gained strength enough to hold their spade or to gain their livelihood in some other way.

We should never finish if we were to relate one by one all the acts of charity which Camillus performed for the good of the hospital-sick. We may finish with saying that, however valuable and wonderful they were in themselves, their frequency and number made them so familiar and natural in him that no one wondered to see him performing them, and people seemed even not to notice them, as if in him they were not so extraordinary or wonderful.

CHAPTER FIVE

Camillus Has a Miraculous Knowledge of Dying People Who Are yet in a State of Mortal Sin

Before we pass on to the works of charity which Camillus performed for the good of the sick in private houses, we will remain a little while longer in the hospitals to observe the very special gift that God had given him, of knowing the good or bad state of the consciences of the dying.

One morning Camillus was kneeling before the altar of the Blessed Sacrament making his usual mental prayer, when he suddenly rose and ran straight to the bed of a dying person, who had already lost his speech, and with his mouth full of phlegm was very near expiring. As soon as he reached him, he said to him: "My brother, you are dying, see whether you have made a good confession, for if you were to die in sin you would go to

hell and remain there for ever." The assistant priest wondered at this way of speaking and muttered to himself: "What a way of talking! to remind a man nearly dead of confession!" and half disdainfully he went away from the bed and left Camillus there alone. The event, however, proved that Camillus had spoken thus, not by chance, but by the inspiration of God; for at that moment the dying man's speech returned, and he asked for a confessor. Then Camillus ran to find D. Pietro, the confessor of the hospital, and begged him to come at once and hear the wretched man. This priest also was angry at the request, and vented his impatience by talking to another priest about Camillus as an importunate and troublesome fellow, who was never contented, wanting the priests to confess the dying over and over again. Still he went, and to his astonishment found that the unhappy man was in extreme need of confession. The dying man himself declared with tears to some of our Fathers that for five years he had abused this sacrament, and he gave hearty thanks to our Lord for having given him this grace through Father Camillus; after three hours of true penitence he passed full of contrition from this life to a place of salvation, as we have ground for hoping. The two priests were quite thunderstruck, and they could not help proclaiming through the whole hospital that Camillus was a great servant of God, illuminated by Heaven to penetrate the depths of the conscience and to discover secret faults.

On another occasion Camillus left a priest in the hospital, who had been two or three days in his agony, and went up to his room to rest; but in a few hours he got up suddenly and went to find the priest and exhorted him with the greatest earnestness, if he had anything to tell the

confessor, to do it at once; the dying man obeyed, and directly after receiving absolution, he expired.

On another evening Camillus had taken off his clothes to go to bed, when he felt himself inspired to go down into the hospital; he dressed himself again and went, and found a man just dying; he asked him whether he had made his confession; the man said that he had made his confession, but had not received the Holy Eucharist nor Extreme Unction. Camillus caused the two sacraments to be administered to him forthwith, and in a quarter of an hour the man died.

One morning in crossing the Bridge of St. Angelo, he found a poor old man lying on the ground very ill; Camillus lifted him up and took him to the hospital, and after bringing him a little to himself, he asked the confessor to come and hear him, for the time was short. The confessor objected and thought that it might be put off till the next morning. But Camillus insisted that it should be done immediately. The sick man was confessed, received Extreme Unction, and died very soon after, to the wonder of all and to the mortification and confusion of the confessor.

On another occasion three days had elapsed since a delirious person had spoken a word; Camillus addressed him and exhorted him to be sorry for his faults. The delirious man awoke at his words and appeared to have returned to his senses; certainly, he recovered his voice. He was then asked if he wished to make his confession, and he answered yes. Camillus immediately called the confessor, and after he was confessed, he begged that he might receive Communion; the confessor did not know how to decide, partly because he feared the man had not quite returned to himself, and partly because he thought and affirmed that he was not in such very great danger,

and that it would be safer to give him Communion the next morning. Yet Camillus was firm in desiring that he might be communicated forthwith, and after Communion he had Extreme Unction administered, and very soon after the man died. Camillus took the opportunity of rebuking the priest, telling him that another time it would be better to believe an old man, who had been employed for forty years in assisting the dying.

Yet it was not only by experience, but by internal impulses, and by his gift of foreseeing the future, that he was so earnest in having the sacraments administered to some who did not seem so near their end: and the event proved that his presentiments were always correct.

Camillus used often to say that one of the greatest abuses he had found in the hospitals was the repugnance of the chaplains and confessors to administer the sacraments to the sick who were in manifest danger of death. He, therefore, deterred by no human respect, but actuated solely by the zeal of saving souls, would encourage them, goad them on, rebuke them severely, and threaten to accuse them to their superiors.

One day he met in the hospital a certain secular priest who often neglected to administer the sacrament of Extreme Unction, so that through his carelessness many died without this powerful assistance. Camillus rebuked him very sharply and concluded with these memorable words: "Father, to punish you for your neglect, God will permit you to die without this sacrament." The prophecy was soon fulfilled; the priest fell sick in a few days and died without the holy oil, by the neglect of a priest more careless than he.

Nor must it be supposed that Camillus said these things from any presumption that he had of his long practice and experience in attending the sick. For he was

as resolute with, and rebuked as sharply, the ministers and confessors who would not follow his advice from a totally opposite principle, namely, a great delicacy of conscience. For as he saw that his presentiments were never false, he considered himself bound under pain of God's displeasure, to advise, to insist, and even to rebuke and threaten those who opposed him, whenever he felt himself inspired to give the sacraments to the sick.

And, indeed, he had good reason to do so, as may be seen from the following fact: The physician had dismissed a sick person and ordered his clothes to be given to him, saying that he was cured. Camillus saw him, and not only opposed the orders of the physician, but also expressly commanded that Extreme Unction should be administered to him, instead of his clothes being given to him, for he would be dead in a little while. The servants laughed at this proposition and mocked him for supposing himself to be wiser than the physician. Yet the prior, who held him to be a saint, would have Camillus obeyed. So Extreme Unction was administered, and within a quarter of an hour the man was dead, and the laughs and scoffs were changed into astonishment and admiration.

All these things happened in the hospital of St. Spirito. We will finish the chapter with a few things that happened in other hospitals out of Rome.

In 1608 Camillus went into the hospital at Milan, to recommend the soul of a person who was fast dying. The Saint knew by an interior illumination that the dying man's conscience was in a very bad state; and although it was near midnight, he sent to call the confessor of the hospital to come and hear him immediately. The priest was filled with wonder, both because he had already heard his confession and administered the other sacraments, and

because he had left him in his agony and quite unable to speak; so he grumbled to himself, this must be another of Father Camillus's usual scruples. Nevertheless, he went; Camillus then most warmly recommended him to see to that poor soul which so much needed assistance. The confessor went to the dying man and found that he had recovered his speech, and the first words he said were these: "I am fifty years old and have never made a good confession; but the exhortations of that tall Father have filled me with such compunction that by God's grace I have resolved to make a good confession." He did so, with great appearance of grief for his sins, and died in a few hours, leaving the confessor quite amazed, but at the same time convinced that Camillus had obtained the return of his speech for the wretched man, who must otherwise have been eternally damned.

In the hospital of Genoa one of the nurses, named Barbara, was sick and reduced to such a state that she could neither speak nor swallow; she had received the sacraments and was in her agony, and a priest, named Father Andrew, was with her earnestly recommending her soul. Camillus accidentally came there, and Father Andrew said to him: "Father, you have come in time to do an act of charity;" then Camillus asked the nurses what the sick woman's name was, and being told that her name was Barbara, he went to the bedside and said to her: "Barbara, doubt not." Then he made the sign of the cross over her forehead, mouth, and throat, and the sick woman sighed, then began to speak, and got out of her bed safe and sound. The other nurses, in astonishment at this miracle, asked St. Camillus if she would die. Camillus answered: "Not now, but she will not escape long." Then he exhorted her to keep herself in the grace of God and to go often to confession, saying which, he

left her. Barbara returned to her office of nursing the sick, but in about three months she fell sick again and died in a few days.

We will end the chapter with what Father Salvatore Barberi, prefect of our house at Mantua, attests, namely, that he had been often in company with St. Camillus, in Naples, in Rome, in Palermo, and other places, employed with others, lay brothers and Fathers, in assisting the sick in different hospitals, and had always seen him full of care for the salvation of the dying, and had, to his great wonder, observed the Saint knew by the spirit of prophecy, what each one of them needed; this was evident, for he often gave to his religious lists with the names and numbers of the beds of those unhappy persons who were near their end, and at the same time stood most in need of exhortations, of confession and of the other sacraments, and strongly enjoined the Fathers not to leave them before they had seen them well reconciled to God and fortified by the Viaticum and Extreme Unction; and experience showed that all whose names were put down in his lists had indeed every need of these aids; he wished, moreover, that they should be kept aroused and exhorted, not only to receive the sacraments in good dispositions, but also to be willing to sacrifice their life to God.

By the aid of this gift it is impossible to say how many were put by Camillus into the way of salvation, who must otherwise have been damned. It is certain, as every one who knew him in the hospitals declares, that a week never passed without affording him an occasion of making use of the light which God had given him for the aid of the dying.

CHAPTER SIX

Camillus's Charity to the Dying in Private Houses

Great as was the fervor and charity of Camillus towards the sick in the hospitals, he was equally compassionate towards the dying in their own houses. And therefore, when he instituted his congregation, he called it "the Congregation of Clerks Regular, Servants of the Sick," so as to comprehend not only the service of the hospitals, but also of the other sick in towns and villages. He would often say: "The hospitals are a little inland sea, but the recommendation of souls a shoreless ocean: for there are people dying always and everywhere."

He wished his religious to be careful in gaining a perfect knowledge of the various disorders and infirmities to which the souls of the dying are liable, so as to be able to apply to them the proper remedies. He would bear any inconvenience for their sake, and whenever he was called, whether by day or by night, he went to their assistance. What a touching sight to see a poor old man laboring hither and thither, with a painful wound in his leg, and with his staff in his hand climbing stairs so steep, so dark, and so dangerous that they would have frightened the most active young man. How often has he suffered terrible falls in these visits! how often has he almost stunned himself by knocking his head against the lintels!

Once in Rome he was returning from visiting a dying man long past midnight, without a lantern, and he knocked his wounded leg against a beam that was lying across the road, causing him such excruciating pain that he fell down and fainted away. His companion helped him to get up, and he crawled home, praising and blessing

God, but at the same time leaving his track marked by drops of blood. Nevertheless, the next day he went to the hospital in the Via delle Carozze, as if there had been nothing the matter. This was either a miracle of God's power in sustaining him, or a miracle of his own charity, in despising the pain; for he himself confessed that his wound was so much increased by that blow that it never after ceased to torment him. Still he did not give up his nocturnal visits to the dying, saying that he would not be overcome by the devil, and persuading his religious to show the same constancy and courage.

In order to try whether they were really the persons that he wished them to be, he would sometimes, especially when it rained or stormed very violently, send some one to tell them to get up and go to assist some sick person; and when he saw that the Father had made haste to dress himself, he sent and told him to go to bed again. In his own case, he never showed any discretion, for on the darkest and stormiest nights he would go to the most distant places wherever he was called.

It is recorded that one night at twelve o'clock two of his religious had been for many hours in the house of a dying man; and as it rained very violently, it was not easy to relieve them; but Camillus got two cloaks out of the wardrobe to defend himself and his companion, and set off to the house where the religious were. These cloaks were white, with very long hoods, as was then the fashion. So when they entered the room, the persons there were quite frightened, not being able to imagine who they were and what they had come for. The good Camillus laughed, and he and his companion took off the cloaks, put them on the other Fathers, and sent the latter back to the house, remaining themselves to supply their places.

One other very stormy night our religious were summoned to attend the porter at the gate of St. Paolo, who was dying. Camillus thought this too good an opportunity to be missed for satisfying his zeal. He leaped out of bed, and thinking nothing of the distance, the rain, or the mud, he went and, with his clothes wet through, remained with the dying man till morning.

Often in going to, or returning from, these visits of charity, his light would be put out by the rain or wind, and he was left to flounder about the gutters and foot-paths, in great danger of falling.

One night he was returning late in the rain with his companion from a dying man, and when they came to the house, they found the bell-rope broken, so that they were obliged to stand a long while knocking at the gate before the porter heard them. On that occasion Camillus said to his companion, in imitation of St. Francis to Fra Leone: "Now indeed, my brother, we shall be true Servants of the Sick, if we are obliged to stand here all night, wet through and covered with mud; or if instead of opening the door for us, the porter were to come out in a rage at our having waked him, and were to give us a good beating. Then, my brother, I should say that we were true Servants of the Sick, if we had patience and did not at all lose our temper at such bad treatment. May our Lord give us the grace to suffer it and to understand its object."

Moreover, he tried to inflame his religious to this holy exercise, often saying to them: "Fathers and brothers, remember that you have been called by God to be advocates and defenders of the patrimony of Jesus Christ; namely, the souls of those poor people, which He has redeemed with His precious blood."

He also gave them some important instructions for performing this office well, such as, not to allow any one to weep in the sick man's room, or to laugh, or to tell the news, or speak on impertinent subjects; but, to make them all pray in devout silence for the happy passage of the soul; often to hold the crucifix before the eyes of the dying man, and make him kiss the five sacred wounds; not to talk much, or upon subtle and speculative questions, but to spend part of the time in praying, part in suggesting short sentences proper for exciting sorrow for sin, a determination never more to offend God, hope in His mercy, patience in suffering, the desire of Paradise, and the wish to persevere to the end in the Catholic faith, and above all a most tender feeling for the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ; after the death of the person to wait at least as long as it would take to say the Psalm *Miserere* three times before covering the face and closing the mouth and eyes, for he had witnessed most strange things, and he believed that through neglect of this rule many dying persons were suffocated.

About the question which was then being discussed among us, whether the dying in their last moments could hear or not the words and the whispers of the assisting priest, he held the secure side, and wished the dying always to have some devout sentiment whispered to him, saying, that if he could hear, it must be of great use to him, in helping to keep him united to God; and if he could not hear, those good sentiments would at any rate serve to torment the devils and keep them away from the bed, besides moving the persons around to greater devotion and to pray more fervently for the poor man's happy passage.

When Camillus was recommending a soul and assisting the dying, he applied himself more particularly to

making them pronounce continually the sweet names of Jesus and Mary and to implore the help of their angel-guardian and their patron saint; this he did with such fervor that he seemed on fire with love, and he appeared to see clearly the beauty and value of souls, so earnest was he in his desire of their salvation.

But his strongest resource was earnest prayer to God that He would not allow the soul to depart from the body without first granting it the grace of perfect contrition and of final perseverance; in this prayer his expressions were very simple, but they had wonderful effect on the hearts of the dying, to increase their confidence in God and their fortitude in their last dangerous conflict.

Hence it is not to be wondered at that so many persons ardently desired to be assisted by him on their death-beds, thinking that if they had the Saint by their side, they need fear no assault of the devil.

It was with this feeling that the wife of D. Pietro Bazzano, Viceroy of Abruzzo, sent from Chieti to Santobuono, where Camillus was staying with Prince Mario Caracciolo, to beg him to come to assist her dying husband. Camillus went immediately and stayed with him till the last: and she was so pleased that she told every one that her only consolation at the death of her husband was the remembrance that he had expired in the arms of F. Camillus.

It was supposed, and with good reason, that on some occasions he was rapt in ecstasy and saw our Lord Jesus Christ, the Madonna, the angels and saints descend from heaven to assist the dying; sometimes too he saw the devil issuing from the bottomless pit.

At the request of Count Serbelloni, he went to assist a certain Milanese, Leone Posterla, who was dying

in Rome. On entering the room, he first recited the Litany of our Lady; then he extended his arms and lifted his eyes to heaven and knelt motionless and entranced in prayer; after a little time he got up, and as though he saw the dying person in a fierce struggle with the tempter, he went to the bedside and said to him with a voice troubled with anxiety: "Signor Leone, the hour is come when you must depart out of the world. Put your trust in the mercy of the Lord who has shed His blood for your salvation. See how He displays to you His wounds. Look, He is showing you His wounded side; behold Him crowned with thorns; be firm, and do not consent to the temptations; do not believe this accursed spirit." Then he turned to the devil and said: "Begone with thee, devil, thou hast nothing to do here" (sprinkling at the same time the holy water); "if he has sinned, he has sinned through human frailty, and God has pardoned him."

Then he knelt down and said the Litany again, begging all that were present to pray for the departing soul. After he had finished the Litany, he began again to comfort the dying man: "Come, Signor Leone, my dearest brother, behold the most Holy Virgin who has come to help you; behold her, look at her, and take comfort. Behold St. Francis kneeling before her begging grace for you. Behold the angels, the archangels, the cherubim and seraphim, and all the company of heaven making intercession for you."

Then he again lifted up his eyes to heaven, fell on his knees, and bowed down his face to the ground, as if he were making reverence to some unseen being; and at this moment the sick man expired. Then Camillus stood up with his hands joined, and fixing his eyes on

the face of the dead man, he cried out: "O happy soul, that art departed in the hands of the glorious Virgin."

No one can tell what a consolation these words were to Leone's wife and family. All sorrow ceased at once and gave place to that joy which ought to be felt when one is certain that a soul has found rest in the bosom of its God. This certainty was much increased by the fact that Camillus, who had never known anything about this man, in assuring the persons present of the happiness of the departed, knew that his principal patrons were the Madonna, in whose honor he recited the Little Office every day, and St. Francis, whose cord he wore; moreover, he every morning gave up an hour to mental prayer in honor of his two patrons; these facts were well known to his family and especially to his wife.

The first person at whose death Camillus assisted in Bocchianico was a great swearer, named Giovanni Mammarella, who had arrived at the age of ninety years without ever correcting himself of this vice. Camillus, as soon as he had put his foot over the threshold, cried out: "The great beast is here, but by the grace of God he must go." Before going to see the sick man, he went through all the rooms with his crucifix in his hand, calling out: "Get out of this place, thou great beast." Then he went to the bedside of the sick man and exhorted him to confess, but found him so obstinate in his refusal to receive the sacrament of penance that the poor Father was obliged to work four days and four nights beseeching, persuading, and threatening, before he could make him confess. By the grace of God he at last succeeded, and the old man made a general confession with tears and sighs, and all signs of deep sorrow and real penitence, and soon after expired in the arms of the Saint full of resignation and contrition.

This conversion made such an impression in the neighborhood that for a long time nothing else was talked about, and every one called it miraculous. In the same place Camillus was called to attend a young girl seven years old, who was very ill. As the Saint approached the place where she was lying, he smelt a most heavenly fragrance. The girl was the daughter of a woman named Francesca; as soon as the mother saw the Saint, she ran to him and besought him to pray that her child might be healed; but Camillus, instead of praying, went on repeating: "Oh, what an odor of Paradise! oh, what an odor of Paradise!" Then he spoke on the glory of heaven and declared that he envied the happy lot of the girl. But the mother renewed her prayers and begged that at least he would spread his mantle over her. Camillus answered that it was of no use, for her daughter wished to go to Paradise, and so she died two days after.

Still, although he usually knew supernaturally the state of the dying and the time of their death, yet, unless in some extraordinary cases, or when he saw clearly that it would be of great use to reveal his knowledge, he never did so, and even expressly forbade his religious to form presentiments or to allow themselves to predict the time when the sick would die, telling them that God had reserved this knowledge to Himself, and that if they attempted it, they would be often deceived to their great mortification and shame.

He brought forward his own case in example; for though he had had so many years' practice, yet one night when he was sitting up in the hospital of St. Spirito, he was so mistaken that six or seven sick persons died without his being present at the death of any of them, in consequence of his having mistaken the order

in which they would expire. In the morning he thought it matter for confession, and in relating it he would cry out full of sorrow: "Such is the case, my brethren; that night I was deceived and knew not the real time of the death of those poor people." And yet he would say that to know the exact time when death would take place, nothing was so useful as continual assistance at deathbeds, patience, and perseverance.

But the thing that shows Camillus's zealous and endless charity to the dying is the difficult vow by which he bound himself and his followers to serve and assist "even those attacked by contagious diseases and pestilence." How perfectly he fulfilled this vow, was seen in the plague which devastated Rome and other parts of Italy in 1596, when he and his companions were to be found wherever the plague raged, feeding the sick, or carrying them on their backs to the hospital, or exhorting the dying to repent, and administering the sacraments to them without any consideration for their own life. And not content with this, when he heard that the plague had appeared in any place, however distant, thither he would immediately proceed.

Thus when he was in Genoa, as soon as he heard that the contagion had appeared in Milan, he set out for that city at once, and as he had not means of transport for his party, they were obliged to go most of the way on foot. He suffered many inconveniences, dangers, and disasters in this journey, as well as after his arrival in Milan. It appears from the processes that he was not once discouraged, but pushed on day and night through the desire of losing no time in coming to the assistance of the dying. It is recorded also that he was always

the first to assist the infected, very many of whom died in his arms, with all the signs of salvation, converted by his burning words; many also owed their lives and the recovery of their health either to his prayers or to his quickness in running to their assistance.

So again, as soon as he heard that the pestilence was in Nola, he flew thither from Naples, against the advice of all the physicians, who declared that he was running into the jaws of certain death. But the charity of Camillus knew no obstacles; he willingly exposed himself to the danger, partly to see whether his religious fulfilled their vow exactly, but much more to have the opportunity of fulfilling it himself when it was so much the more meritorious, as there was greater danger. Yet neither on this occasion, nor on any other, did our Lord permit His servant to catch the disease, but preserved him for an example and encouragement to his religious and for the assistance of the dying.

This spirit of charity was so impressed by Camillus upon the hearts of his spiritual children that after more than two centuries, when the scourge of the cholera was devastating Italy, the religious opened hospitals and lazaretti in their own houses, without regard to themselves, or fear for the danger, ready to sacrifice their lives in so beautiful an act of charity. The cities of Genoa, Casale di Monferrato, Tortona, Naples, and Palermo, have borne witness to this fact and have written testimonials of it to the glory of God and St. Camillus.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Pleasure That Our Ministry and Assistance of the Dying Gives the Angels, and the Rage That It Puts the Devils In

That our religious may be the more encouraged to second the desires of our holy Father and to spare no labor in succoring their neighbors in their last moments, I will show in this chapter how pleasing our high calling is to the angels and how offensive to the devils. In the first place we will avail ourselves of the testimony of St. Philip Neri. Virgilio Crescenzi, a Roman patrician of singular goodness, and father of Cardinal Crescenzi, was dying in Rome; our religious were assisting him, and St. Philip was there also for the same purpose. He turned to one of our Fathers, named Claudio Vincenzo, and said to him: "Persevere heartily, Father, in this holy office of charity to the dying, for I tell you, for your comfort, that I have seen the angels of the Lord putting words into the mouth of one of your Fathers while he was recommending the soul of a dying man, at whose bedside I also was present."

This one testimony, coming, as it does, from St. Philip, so highly venerated throughout the Catholic world for his extraordinary sanctity, ought to be enough to console any one who is assisted by our religious, and to encourage us to give ourselves up to the assistance of the faithful in the exercises of our holy Institute. Nevertheless I will add a few more facts, which will not be incredible to those who know that it is an office given more specially by God to His angels to guard and defend us chiefly in the hour of our death; nor to those

who reflect that when our Lord was in His agony in the garden, "An angel appeared to Him, comforting Him" (St. Luke, 22:43).

In the same city of Rome there was a very devout woman who desired to be assisted by two of our religious at the time of her death. After she had been some time ill and was now near her end, she sent a person to our house to ask for this favor. Now we had so few laborers and so many sick-calls that it was impossible to grant the request. Two angels, however, supplied the deficiency; they came clothed in the habit of Servants of the Sick, with the cross on their breast, for three successive days, and remained with her till she rendered up her soul to God in their holy arms. There is no doubt that they were angels, because when the dead woman's family talked in most grateful terms of the great charity which had been done, as they supposed, by our religious, our Fathers took every possible pains to find out which of them had attended this person, and they were not able to find out that a single Father had been there even once.

Another fact shows the care that the angels take that the dying should be assisted in their agony. During the time of the mortality in Rome, in 1596, about midnight a beautiful youth presented himself at the gate of the Maddalena and begged that two religious might be sent to assist a dying man. They were sent immediately, and the young man himself went with them and pointed out to them the door of the room where the dying man was, and then immediately disappeared from their eyes, so that they wondered and felt certain that it was an angel. They were confirmed in this belief by ascertaining from the dying man that neither he nor any one else of the family had sent any one to call for the Fathers.

The rage of the devils at Camillus's works of charity was equal to the pleasure of the angels. This was proved by the sequel of the fact that I have just related; for scarcely had the two religious begun to exhort the old man and to pray for him, than they saw three terrific specters of devils, with faces and eyes of fire, trying to frighten them away from their work of charity; but they were not able to endure the potent sign of the cross nor the holy water which the good religious sprinkled at them; but when they disappeared, they left behind them in the room an intolerable stench, thereby proving the reality of the apparition.

Nor was this the only occasion when the devils showed their infernal rage at seeing Camillus and his companions rescue so many souls from their fangs and make such gain for heaven. I might bring forward very many instances, but I will confine myself to a few which took place in Rome. Two of our religious were returning at midnight from visiting a dying man, when suddenly they were encountered by a vile specter, like a ferocious ox, making at them with its horns. At this sight they fell to the ground and called out, invoking the most holy name of Jesus, by which they were delivered; but such was their fright that one of them burst a blood-vessel, and the other suffered for many days with a trembling in all his limbs.

Another of our congregation, who was also returning from assisting a sick man, near the Strada di Tor Sanguigna, received a terrible blow as from a stone, in the side, without being able to discover either the stone or where it came from. But at the same time there was flying round the head of his companion a foul black bird, and he was as much frightened by the apparition of this brute as the other was hurt by the blow. Others

again of our people, who had been to the Borgo St. Angelo, to exercise the same charitable office, on coming to that part of the bridge where malefactors used to be tied up, heard such a strange and frightful noise that their fear made them drop the lantern out of their hand.

But this rage of the devils was more frequently shown by the mouth of the possessed. One of these unhappy persons was ill in the hospital of St. Spirito and was asked if he had been to confession; then the devil, speaking by the tongue of the possessed, answered that he had not confessed and should not confess, for he wanted him to die impenitent and to have him with him in hell. The religious was full of holy indignation at this devilish reply and answered: "O cursed spirit, I hope in God that thou wilt not obtain thy desires, for I am now going to call the confessor." "You had better not go, or you shall repent of it," replied the evil spirit. But the religious walked on and had not gone ten paces before he felt such a blow on his legs that he could not stir; but after he had been a few moments in this state, he called on the most holy name of Jesus and was able to drag himself along to the place where the confessor was and to conduct him to the sick man's bed. As they were approaching, the devils tormented the poor sick man and at the same time made game of the good religious who was the cause of their fury, saying: "There, that's enough — you have attacked us, and we have attacked you." But the devils were confounded by the crucifix, by the holy water, and by the exorcisms which the priest went through, and were obliged to leave the sick person a little while, so that he could confess in quiet.

A certain woman was on the point of death; some other women of the house suggested that two of our Fathers should be sent for; another woman, who was

possessed, but was not known to be so, but was, on the contrary, supposed to be a very devout and good person, hearing this, said: "You need not send to call them, for I have great experience in assisting the sick and dying, and have done so often." The relatives were satisfied at this and left the dying woman to the care of the pretended saint. Then the possessed woman, or rather the devil, using her hands, under the pretense of giving some food to the dying person, stuffed into her mouth a quantity of bread, which she was not able to swallow, and was miserably choked; the family, who had left her in the fangs of the wolf, came up too late to assist her. Now, how many times are we to suppose that this pretended saint (who herself boasted of having done so often) had committed murders of this kind? and how many souls had the devil by her means dragged down to the depths of hell?

I might relate other facts of the same kind that happened in Rome, but these are enough to show the hatred of the devil for our ministry — so I will add only one fact that happened in Bologna a little while after our house was founded there. A possessed person was being exorcised in the cathedral of that city, when two Fathers of our order entered; when the possessed person saw them, he showed many signs of wonder and said: "Who are these Fathers with the cross on their breasts?" The exorcist answered that they were religious of a new order, who had just come to Bologna, whose office it was to assist the sick at their deaths. At this answer the devil made game of them and answered in derision: "What is the use of such fellows? What good will this order be to the world? For when a man comes to die, he has been either a good man in his life or a bad one. If he has been a good man, he has no need of them, as St. Austin says:

‘The man who has lived well, cannot die badly’ ” (and here he quoted other sentences from the saints to the same effect). “And, on the contrary, if he has been a bad man, and has in that state come to his last moments, in this case again these men cannot help him, for it is written: ‘Where I find thee, there will I judge thee,’ ” and other like sentences, and concluded that this order was not necessary for the world.

The learned exorcist discovered the fallacy of this argument and silenced him with these words of Ezekiel: “The wickedness of the wicked shall not hurt him in the day that he turneth away from his wickedness;” and also: “I will not the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; but that he return and live.” He added the example of the good thief, who repented in his last hour and was saved; and of many others who returned to themselves in their last moments and died with all the signs of true penitence and eternal salvation. At these words the possessed fell into convulsions, sighed profoundly, and screamed out over and over again: “How true! How true!” And after bringing out this consoling truth, they became dumb again.

CHAPTER EIGHT

*Camillus Wished That His Religious Should Be Called
in Good Time to the Assistance of the Dying —
Examples to Prove the Importance of This*

St. Camillus was so persuaded that the salvation or damnation of Christians depends on their conduct in their last moments, according to the saying of the wise man: “Where the tree falls, whether to the south or to the north, there shall it lie for ever,” that he was extremely

pained when, for fear of frightening the sick or out of other human respects, our religious were not called in till the patient had either lost his senses or was so utterly in the power of the devil that he could derive no profit from the assistance offered him. Hence he used to say that this was the most cruel persecution and most damnable fraud that the devil could invent, to remain absolute master of the field and to gain numbers of souls unopposed. That the reader may see that the good Father's notion was not groundless, I will relate a few of the many examples that occurred during the life of St. Camillus, which will show plainly the necessity of calling in spiritual aid to the sick without any delay.

Our religious were walking through one of the streets of Genoa, when they were called in haste to assist a woman who was just dying. They went upstairs and found the woman suffering from such a violent cough and so near her end that she could scarcely speak. According to the plan of St. Camillus they asked her whether she was troubled with any scruple that she wished to confess before she lost her senses altogether? At this question she sighed deeply and answered: "Ah, Father, God has sent you here for my salvation. You must know, that for at least thirty years I have disbelieved in the Holy Sacrament of the Altar and have been always ashamed to confess it." The Father was grieved at the shortness of the time she had left, but assisted her as well as he could and heard her confession, after which she scarcely had time to pronounce five times the names of Jesus with tears and sorrow, before she expired, leaving the good Father thunder-struck at the danger which her soul had been in, for if he had been a few moments later, she must have been damned.

An old woman was dying in Bologna and was weeping so bitterly that a Father of ours, who had been called in to her assistance, began to suspect that her conscience was not quiet, and in order to make himself sure, put the question to her. "Ah, Father," she answered, "your suspicion is but too true. It is thirty-two years since one of my daughters fell into sin and became pregnant, and I, to conceal her shame, threw her little child down a drain without even baptizing it, and I have never confessed it!" The religious immediately heard her confession, and she had hardly time to finish it, before death overtook her.

Another woman in Rome, who was in her agony, revealed to one of our priests that for more than twenty years she had lived in concubinage with a person who was present; and though she had been to confession and Communion every Sunday, she had always concealed her hateful commerce. The Father had scarcely time to make her make an act of contrition and to give her absolution, before she shut her eyes and expired.

A gentleman was dying without the sacraments, because he would not relinquish some prohibited books that he had in gilt bindings, for which he had a great affection. Our religious were called, and finding him very near dying, with his heart and tongue occupied with nothing but his dear books, they had great difficulty in inducing him to make his confession; and as the time was too short to allow him to give any other signs of repentance, the Father was obliged to content himself with requiring him to burn the works of Aretino, his favorite author. The Father tore them up in his presence and threw them leaf by leaf into the fire, while the dying man was moaning and saying: "Ah, me, Father, what pain the devil sends into my heart at seeing these books burned." After this

act was finished, he was quiet and embraced affectionately his benefactor, saying to him: "Your Reverence in making me burn these books has done more than Alexander the Great did in conquering the world." Then he ordered that after his death all his books should be burned or made away with; and after receiving Extreme Unction, he died happy.

A certain goldsmith, a man as ignorant of theology as he was skillful in his trade, was dying. The devil took this occasion of tempting him to doubt of the mysteries of our holy faith, and particularly of the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. The good man wished to argue against the subtle sophism which the devil suggested to him; but not being prepared for this, he became so confused as to be in danger of wavering and losing his faith. Luckily for him, his family, seeing how much distressed he was, called in the sons of St. Camillus to assist him in his agony. The sick man took courage when he saw them, and by following their advice, regained his tranquillity; for they counseled him to refuse to dispute and to make no account of the temptation, but to meditate on the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ; he did so and found himself delivered from the temptation, and soon after rendered up his soul in peace into the hands of His Creator.

These examples are enough to show us how necessary the assistance of religious is to the sick, and how important it is that they should be called soon, as the Saint wished. Indeed, he thought it one of Satan's cunningest devices to make the relatives and domestics think that the presence of priests or other spiritual persons might frighten the sick and accelerate their death; whereas our long and wide experience has taught us that, when we are called in time to hear the sick person's confession

and to gain confidence before he is too ill to attend to us, it is quite touching to see how grateful, contented, and courageous he becomes; how ardently he beseeches us to return soon and to promise to be with him when he breathes his last; and how he thanks us for the good we have done his soul.

It would be a great injury to the Divine Goodness to think that He would not endow His ministers with the necessary light to insinuate themselves softly and dexterously into the hearts of the dying, or that He would deny to the sick such a grace as the consolations of His ministers in their last grievous conflict.

If there are any who think thus, let them listen to the following story, which occurred to one of our Fathers in the case of a gentleman who was dying. The devil had tied up his tongue in such a way that, although many religious came to him to console him and exhort him to confess, they could never get a word out of him. At last his family sent for some of our Fathers, whom they feared to send for before, lest they should frighten him. One of them went and soon found out that the poor man would not listen if he talked about matters of religion; so the prudent religious changed his tactics and began talking of hunting, fishing, gardening, and the like, and then asked him whether he would like to hear a song with an accompaniment on the lute. The sick man opened his eyes at this question, and loosening his tongue, answered: "Yes." A domestic immediately came, and while he played and sang, the Father talked about the beautiful harmony and dexterously turned the subject to the delights of heaven and the glories of the blessed. By the grace of God he thus succeeded in rousing the gentleman from his deadly lethargy and in inspiring him with true sentiments of grief and contrition.

He confessed, received the Viaticum and Extreme Unction, and soon after died.

Another of our priests succeeded in converting a dying man by pretending to be a physician, and an excellent physician he was, for he healed a soul which was almost in a desperate state. The facts of the case were as follows: A very rich man of plebeian origin was dying in Genoa, and would not make his confession, as all his thoughts were set upon finding a physician who could cure him. His family called in one of our Fathers to visit him, but it was not possible to introduce him into the sick man's room; so he waited in the antechamber, where he learned from the friends that the sick man did nothing else but call out for, and sigh after, the physician. How ingenious is charity! When the Father heard this, he concerted with the family a little trick, which was to send one of the servants into the room to announce the arrival of a celebrated physician, who thought he could cure him if he would but follow his advice. The dying man brightened up when he heard this and told the servant to show the physician in. So the Father pulled out his shirt-collar and threw back his mantle, so as to hide the cross upon it, and with a pair of gloves in his hand and his hat upon his head, he advanced with a solemn countenance; he saluted the sick man, felt his pulse, and asked him various questions about his symptoms. Then seeing that he could not survive an hour with his frightful cough, he said to him: "Come, I do not despair of curing you, but as my medicine is of use to those only who are without sin and quiet in conscience, while I am preparing it, you must confess and do everything that a true and good Christian ought." "Willingly," replied the sick man: so the parish-priest, who was waiting in the next room, was called in, and heard his confession; and such was the grace com-

municated to him by this sacrament that, as his cough was too violent to allow him to communicate, he of his own accord asked for Extreme Unction, which he received and then immediately expired.

It was also the advice of St. Camillus to use threats and rough language when soft words would not succeed. And this also was proved by experience to be replete with wisdom, for our religious converted many souls by these rigorous means. A certain valiant captain was dying, who refused to confess, either as a point of honor or to show his strength of mind and his fearlessness at the approach of death, or rather, perhaps, from desperation arising from an affront that he had received from a great prince. The Fathers Servants of the Sick were called, and found him in a miserable condition and on the eve of going to appear before the judgment seat of God. They tried all means to bring him to penitence, but for all they could do, he would not listen to a single word about confession. One of the Fathers seeing that persuasion, prayers, entreaties, and tears were of no use, thought of trying another method. He sent some one to bring the crucifix from the pulpit of the nearest church; this he had carried with lights on each side to the foot of the sick man's bed, and he followed after in surplice and stole, took the sick man by a lock of his hair, and cried out to him: "Open your eyes, open your eyes, O miserable man, and behold your great Lord, who has come here, not to show you mercy, which has been offered you so often, and you have rejected it; but to pronounce sentence of eternal damnation against you." The poor man opened his eyes at these words, and the sight of the great crucifix so frightened him that his heart was changed in a moment, and with tears in his eyes he besought the priest, for the love of Jesus Christ who died for him on the cross, to

hear his confession. This was just what the good Father wanted. He heard his confession and then administered to him the Viaticum and Extreme Unction, after which the man died with signs of true penitence.

A similar thing occurred in Rome in the case of a very rich merchant, who was dying with a concubine at his side and refused to confess. Other religious had been there and had used every means to convert: at last one of our Fathers presented himself, carrying a great crucifix, preceded by clerics in surplices with torches in their hands. This sight excited such compunction in the poor man that he asked for a confessor and died with great devotion and penitence, fortified with Extreme Unction.

These facts are enough to show how mistaken an idea it is to abstain from calling in priests and religious to assist the dying, for fear their presence should aggravate their disease and accelerate their death; and at the same time, how God illuminates His ministers to make their words efficacious to drive off the devils from the sick person's bed and to call to penitence even the most hardened and obstinate sinners.

CHAPTER NINE

Further Examples of the Same Subject

The instances adduced in the last chapter are sufficient to show the necessity of calling in priests or other pious persons to assist the dying, and how many souls would have perished unless the ministers of God had happily come in time to save them. In the present chapter we will relate some instances of persons who died in obstinate impenitence through want of such assistance, but who might perhaps have been saved if Camillus's

wish had been accomplished and the religious called in in good time.

In the time of Pope Clement VIII a pack-horse driver, living outside the Porta Angelica, was on his deathbed; our Fathers went in to assist him; as soon as he saw them, he asked them what business they had there. They answered that they had been called in to help him to spend his last moments like a good Christian. "And what do you mean by a Christian?" said the sick man; at the same time, ignorant as he was, he poured out such monstrous blasphemies against the faith that it appeared not himself, but the devil speaking by his mouth. The Fathers tried every means to induce him to repent; but the wretched man, in order to drown their words, did nothing else but invoke the names of three devils to whom he had attached himself. For all this the zealous Fathers did not cease beseeching him to repent; so the miserable man, in a rage, sat up in bed, as if he wished them to understand that he was damned and that it was no longer time for repentance, and turned his eyes to the window of his room and shrieked out three times, each time louder than before, the names of the three devils, and then he thrust out his tongue, twisted his neck and his mouth, and expired miserably; and such a stench issued from his black and corrupting body that it infected the whole room and showed plainly where his unhappy soul had gone. The neighbors told our Fathers that he had never been seen to enter a church. "Most wicked is the death of the sinner!"

A woman of noble birth but scandalous life was taken ill in the house of her paramour. Our Fathers were called in, but so late that she could or would say nothing but: "I burn, I burn." At the same time she made frightful motions with her eyes and face, as if she saw terrible forms,

and her disheveled hair stood on end like so many serpents, to the great terror of the Fathers, who did nothing but pray and exhort her to hope in the mercy of God. But all was in vain, for she did nothing but howl and groan, and repeat continually: "I burn, I burn," and so she expired; and at the moment of her death a great flaming body, like a globe of fire, was seen to come forth from her body.

Another nobleman was dying, and his family put off calling in the Fathers so long that, when they came, instead of being ministers of salvation to him, they became witnesses of his damnation. This man had been such a glutton that his friends confessed he had once spent ten scudi simply in sauces for a kid. In his last moments he blasphemed God with such violence that his horrified family feared that the room where he was would be struck down. The Fathers tried every method to make him cease speaking in this impious way, but all the good they got was to hear him reply: "What does it signify to you if I go to hell?" and to see him expire with a dreadful imprecation on his lips.

Another person who had met with a sudden accident felt himself, and was seen by the bystanders, pulled out of bed by invisible hands. Some one suggested that a priest should be sent for to assist him; but the sick man opposed this, saying that it was of no use, for he was already sold to the devil; and at this moment he was hurled to the ground and died: in laying out his body, it was found that he had an image of the devil set in a ring which he wore on one of his fingers.

These four horrible cases occurred in Rome. A similar neglect in calling in the religious cost the damnation

of an avaricious old man, more than ninety years old, in Genoa. Our Fathers did indeed visit him, and they found him in bed with a little bag of money and a purse tied to his arm, which he kept feeling from time to time, to ascertain that he had not been robbed; and they tried all means to make him understand that such an idolatrous attachment to money would send him to hell. But the miserable man was reduced to such a state that he scarcely had breath to say: "I cannot do otherwise;" and so with these idols of his in his heart he expired.

In Naples our Fathers were assisting a man of bad life, named Scarpinello, who obstinately refused to confess. Before he expired, the light in his room went out twice without any visible cause, and would have gone out the third time unless one of the Fathers had blessed the oil and the flame. But the light only served to show a scene of much greater terror. When the dying man was at his last gasp all the basins, cups, and other earthenware vessels in the room fell on the floor and broke to pieces, and all the fragments leaped up against the dying man's face and body; thus did he give up the ghost, pelted by some invisible hand and with signs of horror on his face. Probably it would not have been impossible by God's help to have converted these persons, if the religious had been called in at the commencement of the illness, or at any rate, before it had come to such extremities.

To be convinced still more of the truth of this observation, it is sufficient to reflect on the houses of the poor and on the hospitals, where the religious enter freely, without any fear of terrifying the sick and without losing time in the antechambers and in making vain compliments, and are received by the good simple souls and listened to with such pleasure that they resign themselves

utterly to the will of God, and when death comes, meet it with joy, as if they were sure of going to the nuptial banquet in heaven.

I could give numberless instances, but will mention only a few. A countryman was dying in the hospital of St. Spirito, and he suddenly turned round and said to the Father who was watching at his bedside: "Come, Father, can I do anything for you? for it is time for me to go to Paradise." The Father answered: "Only remember to pray for me when you are in that blessed country." "Willingly," said the poor man; and then, with joy on his face, he said: "Now, Father, good-bye, I hope we shall meet again;" and then invoking over and over again the sweet names of Jesus and Mary, he gave up his soul into the hands of his Lord; and his hand remained so firmly clasped to the cross on the mantle of the Father that it was very difficult to remove it.

A sick man was dying in the hospital of the Annunziata, at Naples, who talked so divinely about heavenly things that he appeared to be an angel, and not a man. In his last moments he was seen surrounded by a bright light, in the midst of which he expired, and went to enjoy his eternal glory.

A famous bandit was dying in the same hospital, but no one had recognized who he was; he had been assisted from the commencement of his illness by a zealous son of St. Camillus, and was completely converted, so as to be almost broken-hearted at the remembrance of his sins. He held a crucifix in his hand and said: "I repent, O Lord, and I grieve that I have offended Thee; and I thank Thee that I, who have deserved the rack and the wheel and all kinds of tortures a thousand times over, should be at last brought by Thy mercy to die in this holy place, fortified with all the sacraments and with the

assistance of so many good religious, when so many of my companions have died by the hands of the executioner and the soldier." He died in these pious dispositions, beseeching the Fathers never to abandon him. These facts show what reason St. Camillus had to say that it was "safer to die poor and well in the hospitals than rich and ill in the palaces of princes."

We will add two more instances that occurred to St. Camillus himself. He was assisting the wife of a painter in Rome, who was poor in temporal things but rich in virtue and piety; while the Saint was praying for her, supposing her to be already dead, he was surprised to see her gently rise in her bed, as if she had come to life again, and sit up with her hands joined and bow her head three times, as if to salute and thank the holy Father, and then let herself down again gently to her former position, and with a joyful smile on her countenance she rendered up her soul to God, leaving the Saint most happy at having been present at the peaceful death of such a virtuous and holy woman.

Another young person about sixteen years of age was assisted at her death by our Saint; though her disease gave her great tightness and pains in the breast and almost prevented her breathing, yet she kept singing sweetly, and without removing her lips from the side of the crucifix, kept repeating the words which St. Felix the Capuchin said in his last moments: "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, take my heart and return it to me no more;" and she added these words, "pardon me my sins, by Thy holy arms extended on the cross." And with this song in her mouth she went to enjoy the eternal vision of God. The mother of this young virgin, herself a most pious person, declared that the garland of flowers that was placed on her head after death, and the rosebuds that were scattered over the rest

of her body, had hardly touched her virgin limbs before they opened and became beautiful and sweet flowers.

All the facts that I have related confound the reasonings of those persons who in these unhappy times dislike religious being called in to the sick and dying, to move them to contrition and sorrow, so needful in the hour of death; and under the pretense of not saddening the sick man, or even of affording him enjoyment, introduce into his chamber worldly persons, who by their light conversation dissipate his mind and make him lose precious moments on which depends the eternal lot of his soul.

Much more are they to blame, who, in order not to let their sick friends be frightened by the visits of spiritual persons, either prevent their entering the room, or send them back with the excuse that the sick man is asleep or is nearly recovered; this is an evil very prevalent in these days, and the devil gains many souls through it, for on the return of the religious the sick man is either dead or he has lost his speech. But the evil is so common that our only remedy is to pray God to enlighten these blind persons, and to repeat the ejaculation of Moses: "Would that they would consider and understand and think of the last things."

These instances should serve also to make the reader resolve, in case he becomes ill, not to trust to his family, but to make haste and call in some good priest or religious to assist him, for he may be sure that such company will not aggravate the disease nor plunge him into fear and melancholy, but will, on the contrary be a great comfort to him and prepare him to meet death with firmness, as the passage from this vale of tears to the happy port of Paradise.

CHAPTER TEN

Charity of Camillus to All the Poor, Beggars, Prisoners, Orphans, Widows, and Children; His Compassion towards the Very Animals

The charity of Camillus was, however, too great to be confined to the sick and dying; it embraced also all the poor and wretched of each sex and of every condition; on his journeys he made his companion carry a quantity of small coins to relieve the beggars he might meet with by the way; and more than once he ordered his companion to carry a bag of bread tied to his saddle for the same purpose.

If on the way he met with a pilgrim walking, who was weak, or sick, or in any distress, he provided him with a carriage and lodging, and, like the Samaritan in the Gospel, left money with the host that he might take care of him. Again, if he found any priest or religious traveling on foot, even if they were not ill, yet for the reverence he had for them, he either made one of his companions dismount or he gave up his own horse; and however averse they might be to take advantage of his kindness, he would not give way, but besought them, and commanded them in virtue of holy obedience, and obliged them to mount.

Sometimes a person would be so inconsiderate as to take too much advantage of his kindness and leave the good Father to wade for two or three miles through mud, and labor over rough roads, suffering most acute pain in his wounded leg.

If he found any poor religious at the hotels, he would pay their board and lodging for them and would have

them treated as well as himself; and if they had to pass any river together, he would pay the ferry-man for all of them. Nor was his charity confined to the assistance of the poor he met with on the road; as he was very scrupulous in conscience and would not be a party to the slightest damage, corporal or spiritual, done to another, whenever he had to pay imports and dues for religious of his own or of any other order, he protested to the collectors that he was not bound to pay, but gave the money only out of charity and courtesy; he acted thus for fear that the collectors, by exacting these dues from religious and ecclesiastics, might be infringing the canons of the Church, and incurring some censure.

When he was on board a galley, his first care was to find out whether there were any sick persons there, and if he found any, either he visited them himself or sent his companion to visit them, and accompanied his visit with a bountiful alms, and provided them with all that was necessary, though they might be Turks or infidels. Often he gave them all the provision that had been set apart for his own maintenance.

Sometimes he would find a priest among the convicts, who would tell him that he would willingly recite the Divine Office if he had a breviary and spectacles; the good Father, the first opportunity he had of going on shore, would provide him with both these; and although the unhappy man might never have had any intention of reciting the Office, and sold the breviary as soon as he received it, yet, for all this, Camillus, who could never think evil of any one, would put the best interpretation on the act, and suppose that he had sold it, not through deceit, but from want, and would furnish him with another.

On his arrival in port, he would usually leave some alms for the poor galley-slaves, and if any of them requested him to furnish them with shoes, shirts, drawers, or other things, he would send them as soon as he arrived at his house.

Moreover, he always would have the gate of our houses kept open for the poor, and ordered a certain quantity of bread and all the soup that was left from the common table to be distributed to the beggars every day. Sometimes he would dispense it with his own hands, and often he would send away his own portion to be distributed, and go without anything.

While he was general, visiting the house of the order in Genoa, he found that the Father Prefect, on account of the poverty of the house, had prohibited the distribution of bread at the gate. Camillus was very angry and rebuked him severely, asking him: "Did you sow and reap this bread? I tell you that, unless you do good to the poor, God will not do good to you, and in the hour of your death it shall be measured to you with the same measure that you have measured to these poor persons with." And a little experience proved that the Saint had not spoken at hazard, for in the same proportion as they distributed alms at the gate of that house, so did the alms of benefactors flow in.

In Bocchianico, his native place, his charity towards all the poor was very remarkable. He would give two or sometimes five carlini at once to each of the poor young women; he would inquire where the poorest people lived, and would give to all he found in the house a handsome sum: I find in the processes that one day he distributed more than a hundred ducats.

He clothed all the poor people that he found badly dressed, and many witnesses name two sons of a certain

Nardo Gobbo, who were orphans and so destitute that they had not a bit of clothing, and were provided by the Saint with clothes, food, and money.

Nor was he contented with giving alms himself, but he also excited others to do so. In the year 1612 he collected in Bocchianico from the wealthy inhabitants the sum of about 200 ducats, which he laid out in grain, and so supplied many poor persons with bread, who without this assistance must have perished.

I might enumerate many other instances of the same kind that took place in Rome, Genoa, Naples, and other places, especially during those years of famine and pestilence which displayed the charity of Camillus, and the extraordinary and even supernatural ways in which he assisted the miserable and needy of all kinds, but it would take too much time. It will be sufficient to say that, whatever poor person, ragged in dress, or weak with famine, or any other way afflicted, presented himself to Camillus, he was sure to be relieved; and not only did he provide for those who begged his assistance, but directly he saw any such, he was the first to call them and take them with him to the house of the congregation, and then he gave them a new dress or made them eat or gave them money, and sent them away satisfied.

Indeed he was commonly called the father of the poor, and the consoler of the afflicted. Such too was his confidence in God's providence, that he always used to say to his religious, when he saw them fearful lest he should give more to the poor than they could afford: "Trust in God, O cowards, and cast your bread into the river of life, and soon you shall find it in the ocean of eternity." Indeed, the heart of Camillus was so full of pity for the needy that he went so far as to say: "If no poor could be found in the world, men ought to go

in search of them, and dig them up from under ground to do them good and to be merciful to them."

Nor did Camillus forget the poor prisoners, for every feast day he sent them some sacks of bread, and on other days he sent one of his religious to shave and wash them and do other offices of charity. And often he would go himself to visit them, and many were the poor creatures, almost worn out with their long confinement or maimed by the tortures (which were at that time in use for the examination of prisoners), whom his sweetness consoled or his ready assistance comforted and brought back, as it were, to new life. Many were those whom he induced to make good confessions and to take their pains and confinement as a penance for their sins.

And when any one was condemned to be executed, he never spared himself, but he would remain at his side, exhorting him with tears and entreaties to repent of his evil deeds and to take death patiently, and encouraging him to put his trust in God's goodness, that He would accept the sacrifice of his life as an atonement for all his sins. Indeed such was the zeal and charity of Camillus in this pious work that he had the consolation of seeing many of them receive death with resignation and suffer with unconquerable patience.

Moreover, he took especial care of the bashful poor, who would not show themselves in public to beg. He was always inquiring at different houses whether there were any widows, or children, or others in such circumstances, and whenever he found any, he provided so bountifully for them that they ceased to be in need. In the same way he secretly sent money and clothes to the houses of reduced gentlefolks.

In the processes are contained many testimonies of persons who were employed by the Saint in going about

in Rome, Bocchianico, Genoa, Naples, and other places, to find out the poorest families and inform him of them, and by their hands he used to send them alms.

He used often to repeat the verse of the Psalm: "Blessed is he that thinks upon the poor and needy; the Lord shall deliver him in the evil day;" meaning the day of his death. At other times he would quote the words of the Apostle, St. James: "Religion clean and undefiled is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation: and to keep oneself unspotted from this world" (Jam. 1:1). With these and similar texts of Holy Scripture, he used to stir up others to be charitable to the poor, and especially to seek out those who were bashful, saying that this was the most meritorious before God, to succor those who have no resource, because they are unknown.

But Camillus was not satisfied with all these works of charity. Besides the hospital in the Via delle Carozze, which he maintained by his wonderful liberality; besides that for pestilential diseases in the Via delle Terme, to which he sent food and medicine every day; besides his wish that the houses of his order should be always open to the poor of every kind; besides all these, in the jubilee of 1600 he undertook the particular care of the pilgrims who flocked to Rome to gain the indulgences.

Many of them were lodged at the Maddalena, others were provided for in houses at his expense. He took numbers of them to the Ss. Trinita dei Pellegrini, and he was always going about to aid them. It was a beautiful sight to see him humble himself to the poorest persons, washing their feet, serving them at table, giving them drink, and assisting them to undress and get into bed.

And not men only, but animals also, had a place in the merciful heart of Camillus. One day as he was trav-

eling towards Abruzzo he found a newly-born lamb, that the shepherds had carelessly left lying in a ditch. When Camillus heard its bleating, he thought of the innocent Lamb Jesus; he got off his horse, took it up, and carried it in his bosom, till he reached the shepherds, to whom he gave it up.

Again, the cook of the house had cut out the claws of a cat to prevent its thieving in the kitchen. When Camillus saw its feet bleeding, he caused it to be attended to, and if he could have found out who had hurt it, he would certainly have imposed a penance on him.

In the Isle of Ischia he found a dog with a broken leg. Camillus used to give it bread every day, and when he went away, he told one of the servants of the house to take care of it, saying: "I too have a bad leg, and I know the misery of not being able to walk; this is a creature of God, and from the fidelity of this dog to his master, I, an ungrateful man, ought to learn to be faithful to my Lord."

One of our religious who had been ill was basking in the sunshine and diverting himself with trying to kill an ant with his stick. Camillus besought him not to kill it, as it also was a creature of God. The religious answered that many persons disliked that insect, because it provided in the spring for the autumn and gave itself the airs of an owner of property. "This is just the reason," said Camillus, "that you should not kill it, because it is an example to us, as the wise man says, to lay in a stock of good works in this life, so as to find them in the other; especially when the cold winter of death comes upon us." So true is it that the very ants served our Saint as masters to teach him to exercise himself in virtue.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

*Camillus's Love for Holy Poverty and for the
Virtue of Justice*

Hitherto we have seen the fervor of Camillus in the practice of the Theological Virtues. Let us now see his love for the Evangelical Counsels, and his zeal and exactness in observing them; as well as his heroicity in the other moral virtues. We will begin with poverty.

In this he delighted and gloried more than men of the world do in their wealth. He loved to dress like a poor man and did not care if his clothes were old and patched; he used to say: "Patch upon patch; it is not the pretty dress, but good works, that make the good religious." It was a great trouble to make him put on a new habit; and it was almost always necessary to overreach him by taking away the old things at night and leaving new ones instead. A trick of this kind was played him at Ferrara; but as he knew that the house there was very poor, he sold the new dress to the Jews and spent the money on the house.

He would never have more than a simple mattress and a blanket. He was often found shut in his room mending his clothes. Once the superior saw him so ill clad, with his garments so torn and patched, that he ordered the tailor to make a new habit. The man went to measure him; but Camillus said to him: "I don't want these things; this dress can be mended again, and this mantle will last me three years longer," and he would not allow the tailor to take his measure.

For love of holy poverty he passed an entire winter only wearing his shirt and cassock, without any breeches;

for he wished to taste the fruits of the virtue by suffering the want of some necessary. He was much grieved whenever he saw any of his religious anxious in asking for, or obtaining, extra garments or linen, and used to say: "These people boast of being religious and of having made the vow of poverty; but they don't like to feel the weight of the inconveniences of poverty."

There was only one thing in which he did not seem to care so much for poverty; and this was in his stock of rags, bandages, and lint for his sore leg. And no one who wished to do him a favor could present him a more acceptable present than a box of these things. And there were many ladies who venerated him, who made it their business to collect these things for him. But this pleasure was caused, partly, by the necessity he was under of continually bandaging his wound, and partly, by his love of cleanliness. For although he was most strict in his poverty, yet he was always extremely clean; and though he was continually in the hospital among all the ointments and grease, yet he was never seen with soiled clothes or dirty hands; and he used to give this advice to his religious: "To take great care of external cleanliness, as being a sign of purity of mind; for extreme poverty and extreme cleanliness agree very well together."

He showed this love of poverty, not only in his garments, but also in his food, which he would always have of the usual kind, and never would accept of any delicacy which was sometimes presented to him as general, or on account of his weak health and sore leg. Moreover, he scrupled about washing his mouth out with a little wine during the day, saying that water was good enough; once when he was in Naples, a pittance rather larger than that of the others was presented to him at

dinner, but he refused it, severely rebuking the person who presented it to him.

F. Giovanni Tommaso Medici relates that, while he was in his novitiate at Messina, St. Camillus, as general of the order, was visiting the house there; he was at that time procurator of the refectory and, out of respect, had put into the Saint's portion of soup a little cinnamon. Camillus asked him if the other portions had been flavored in the same way, and when the novice answered no, he rebuked him sharply, and ordered him to give himself the discipline in public as a penance. He many times publicly rebuked the refectory-brother for giving him too great a portion, and made him take it away.

He would not be singular in anything or have any mark of distinction paid him, but liked to be treated as the last of the brethren. He would never have more furniture in his room than one common wooden table with writing materials, a few books, a few prints and a crucifix, his little bed, and a few rush chairs; neither would he be distinguished in the sacristy, but used the common vestments and chalices. In fine, holy poverty was manifest in his person and in everything about him.

Nor must it be thought that our Saint began to practice this heroic poverty only after he had instituted his congregation and had solemnly vowed to practice it. Long before he thought of founding the congregation, even before he was ordained priest, he showed a special affection to this virtue. While he was superintendent in the hospital of St. Giacomo, he really possessed nothing, for he gave away to the poor everything that he gained except just sufficient for a very scanty maintenance, without laying by a farthing against any accidental want. He gave a more heroic proof of this love of poverty in Bocchianico, while he was yet in the world, for he sold

the little property that came to him on the death of his parents and gave the proceeds to the poor of that place.

Here we may mention his extreme delicacy of feeling with respect to the property of others. In this he was a perfect follower of holy Tobias, who was troubled at hearing that there was a kid in his rooms; he watched with the greatest attention over everything that came into the house for the maintenance of his religious and would sometimes send back large donations, fearing that there might be some mistake about them.

In Book II, Chapter X, I have related what took place in the case of Signor Camillo Rinuccini; here I will give an account of an affair that happened with Signor Nicolo de Angelis, the Consistorial advocate. The first time that the procurator of alms went to beg of him, he took out two testoni and gave them to him. When the procurator got home, he found among the other coins a Spanish doppia. Camillus, fancying that there might be some mistake, ordered him to go back directly and restore the doppia. He found that it was true that the advocate never intended to give it; but the good man was so pleased with the exactness and disinterestedness of Camillus that he promised to become a continual benefactor of the order, and told the procurator to come to him once a month for an alms. Moreover, he conceived such a veneration for Camillus that, whenever he saw him, he fell at his feet and begged his blessing, and was always proclaiming him to be a saint, utterly untainted with any avarice and most enamored of poverty.

Since we have almost insensibly passed from Camillus's poverty and his disinterestedness, to his love of justice, we will go on to speak of his excellence in this virtue, as justice is always joined to poverty and disinterestedness.

I find in the processes that his father, Giovanni de Lellis, had bought some article of a tradesman, and as he did not know whether it had been paid for, he sent a relative of his all the way to Ortona with three ducats, telling him to seek out the heirs of the tradesman and to ask them to be satisfied with that sum in consideration of his poverty and of his having inherited nothing from his father, so that he was not bound to pay his debts. The gentlemen were so pleased with this action that they willingly gave him a full quittance; the Saint said afterwards that he had done so to unburden his father's conscience, who had died with that debt upon him.

Another time as he was returning by a very bad road from Pescara, a Father who was with him took a cane from a neighboring vineyard and gave it to him to walk with. After using it for some time, Camillus returned it to the Father, telling him to take it back to the place he had taken it from, that the owner might not be injured.

When he was traveling, he would never, on any account, allow his companions to walk over sowed fields, so scrupulous was he of doing anything that might injure his neighbor.

I have related in the first book that St. Camillus was ordained on the title of a patrimony, secured to him by Signor Fermo Calvi. As soon as his order was established and he had taken the solemn vows, he voluntarily relinquished the patrimony to his benefactor, as may be seen by the public records, and ever afterwards celebrated under the title of poverty.

It often happened that the procurator of alms brought home considerable sums; the Saint always inquired who had given them; and if he was told that some prelate

had given them upon being told that the order was in great want, the Saint would protest and send him back immediately to restore the money and to tell the benefactor that they were really in want, but not in great want. He did so, because he thought that he could not in conscience make use of alms which were obtained by exaggeration. In these restitutions it would be difficult to say which was the greater, the surprise of the donors in having their money returned to them or the mortification of the procurator in having to take them back after having received them.

When he kept the night watch in St. Spirito, he was so careful not to use anything belonging to the hospital that he would not even take a glass of the hot water which was dispensed to all without reserve; and when he recited his Office by the side of a dying man's bed, he had a lamp of his own, that he might not waste the oil of the hospital.

He used often to send his religious to walk in some vineyard, to enjoy the sun and fresh air, and to refresh themselves after the fatigues and infected air of the hospitals, but he strictly charged them never to touch anything without the permission of the owner or of the keeper of the vineyard; and if any one transgressed this order, he was sure of a severe chastisement, as happened one day in the vineyard of Signor Mignanelli.

Camillus had gone there with some of his religious, who plucked about thirty figs without asking leave. The Saint grieved bitterly over this fault and gave a most severe penance to the culprits, at the same time paying the gardener most liberally for his loss.

A lay brother just recovering from an illness went to take the air in a vineyard near the church of St. Onofrio, and on his return brought home with him a few radishes.

Camillus asked him if he had got them from the gardener or with his leave. He answered, "No;" and sick and weak as he was, Camillus sent him back to restore them, though the distance was more than a mile.

In 1600 he was traveling from Naples to Abruzzo; on the last day of their journey they missed the way, and to regain the road they were compelled to pass over some sown fields; they were obliged to lead their horses after them, which occasioned as much pain to Camillus as if they had been trampling upon his own body instead of on the sown fields; and although his companions assured him that the field would not be at all damaged, he could not be satisfied without finding out the owner, that he might make compensation for any loss.

Indeed, he was such a lover of justice that during the whole period of his generalship he took the greatest pains to give to each his due in the distribution of offices, rewards, and punishments; he never allowed his neighbor to be damaged in the slightest way, in fame or in property; he had the greatest reverence and esteem for all persons in authority; and, moreover, he wished justice done, although he had to suffer loss by it.

He gave a notable example of this when Cardinal Mondini left all his property, to the amount of about twenty thousand scudi, to the congregation. The relatives of the cardinal opposed the will, so that it had to be taken before the tribunals; but Camillus, although his order was then in the greatest necessity, and this legacy was enough to free them from all their debts, only said this to the advocates and to the judges: "Give me simple justice." Nor would he ever seek patronage or advocates in order to have the verdict; and this act was so pleasing to God that He rewarded him by causing the affair to be settled in the most satisfactory manner.

CHAPTER TWELVE

*Camillus's Wonderful Zeal to Preserve His Chastity
Inviolatè*

In the virtue of purity Camillus was so highly graced by God that it was his most splendid gift. When he talked of it and recommended it, the veins of his forehead and neck would swell up with excitement. To describe this privilege of his, he used to adapt the words of St. Paul relative to his rapture: "I know a man who by the grace of God, for more than thirty years, has no more felt this temptation than this wall feels." And with these words he would strike the wall such a blow, as if his fist had been armed in steel.

At other times he was heard to say: "What can the devil do when a man is firm in driving away all bad thoughts? You could sooner make an ass drink when it is not thirsty, than make such a man consent to them." As the best remedy for these temptations, he used to tell persons to drive away immediately every evil thought that the devil suggested; and, without waiting a moment, to spit in his face and despise him. He had been taught this by a Capuchin, in Manfredonia, and had ever afterwards used it with perfect success.

Once, while he was instructing the novices, he spoke to them as follows: "My brethren, let us be ever on the watch to drive away temptations, throwing them off from our heart as we would throw off a piece of red-hot iron from our flesh. Fly even the slightest occasions of such thoughts, and at the same time strengthen yourselves by thinking on death and on hell; but above all, on the passion of Jesus Christ, and say to Him in the depth of your heart: 'Pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear'."

What he taught others, he fulfilled perfectly himself; he resisted the first motions of unclean thoughts by spitting in the face of the devil and by calling to mind the eternal truths; and he avoided every occasion, however slight, as he would a viper. It was his maxim, that in this matter no occasion could be anything but great and dangerous, as experience shows, that a single spark of fire is sufficient to ignite a whole mountain of straw.

He avoided the sight of women with such determination that he would turn another way when he met them in the street, or if he could not do that, would pull down his hat over his eyes and quicken his pace so much that his companion would be obliged to run to keep up with him. But the finest thing was to see him when these meetings occurred in some narrow lane; then he would either turn back, or would flounder through the mud, without caring about getting his clothes dirty and being laughed at as a fool, so that only he might avoid any risk of troubling the purity of his soul.

In Florence one of his religious said to him: "I saw the queen of France today." But he screwed up his eyes and with some severity said to him: "And I would not have moved a step to see a woman." And not only did he avoid looking at women, but he used every possible precaution not to allow them to approach near him; and it was one of his greatest annoyances to have to listen to some lady-benefactress, who perhaps had come to him with a long story about her troubles, to have his advice and comfort.

One day a lady, in order to be heard better, kept trying to get nearer him, but the more she moved on, the more Camillus went back, so that at last they had moved their chairs half across the room.

He would never remain alone with any woman, however holy she might be, and there was no possible means that he would leave untried to prevent their kissing his hand: and if he ever had it kissed unawares, he would then with holy modesty secretly wipe it over and over again on his cloak, to the great astonishment of others.

An instance of this occurred at Genoa in the women's hospital. One of the principal ladies there, who had a great devotion to him, kissed his hand; and then when she saw him wiping it on his cloak, she asked his companion: "Why does Father Camillus wipe his hand so often?" but when he told her that it was because of his extreme purity, her wonder was changed into edification, and she saw to what a height of perfection his virtue had arrived.

A woman was once waiting at the gate of the Madalena for Camillus to return, that she might kiss his hand and receive his blessing. When he came, she approached to perform what she intended. But Camillus would not allow her and went to ring the bell, wishing to escape the snare. The good woman saw this and renewed her entreaties with greater warmth. In the meantime the gate was opened, and the Saint leaped in, and covering his face with his left hand, he made the sign of the cross over her with his right, saying: "God bless you, go in peace," and then he had the door shut directly and would not even look at her.

Nor could he endure to see other persons stay to talk with women, and when this occurred with any of his religious, he always rebuked them severely. A remarkable instance of this occurred in Naples.

When the house there was but just founded, Camillus went out with a companion, and met a noble lady who was advanced in years and a great benefactress of the or-

der; she ordered her carriage to stop, and calling Camillus's companion, who was procurator of the house and much beloved by her, she took his hand affectionately and asked him how the religious got on, how he succeeded in his collections of alms, and such things. Camillus stood looking on and boiled up internally at the simplicity of the brother in allowing his hand to be taken and in stopping to talk so long to a woman in the street. As soon as his companion rejoined him, he went within a gateway, and drawing down his cap over his eyes (with him a sign of great anger), he rebuked him so bitterly that the poor man was thunderstruck and unable to answer a word. When they got back to the house, he gave him a public penance; nor would his resentment for that shaking of hands have finished there, although it had only arisen from simplicity and purity, had not the Fathers of the Oratory, for whom he had a great respect, interfered to beg him not to drive the poor man out of the order, as he had resolved to do.

He would never allow, either in men or women, any of those vanities in dress which could possibly excite any thought against purity. Thus he spoke very harshly to a young lady, a relative of his, for taking too much care in arranging her hair, and rebuked her father for allowing such idle vanities. Whenever he spoke in church, he blamed the ornaments of the women, and he would not allow his religious to speak of the fashions of dress, saying that, in the matter of chastity, persons ought to have a scruple about the very smallest things, if they wished to preserve it.

At Chieti four ladies came to salute him and to recommend themselves to his prayers. Camillus went down to them into the church, and seeing that they were finely dressed, he simply saluted them and passed on

without stopping a moment, and he told the Father Prefect, who had called him, that he ought to have done otherwise. Nor was it only with others that he was thus reserved; but he ever showed himself most scrupulous about his own person; so that when his hair was cut, he would not loosen his collar for fear of displaying his neck; and once when the physician ordered him a bath, when he came out, he caused himself to be covered up, and seeing just the end of his foot uncovered, he told the lay brother to help him to cover it, and showed great anxiety about it.

Once it happened in the novitiate at Naples, while the young novices were digging, that one of them in fun touched another; the Saint saw it and was indignant, and even thought of dismissing him from the order, and he gave him a long penance.

Father Prospero Voltabio relates of himself that in Genoa during recreation time, in company with the other religious, among whom was St. Camillus, he uttered these words: "I have already a wife; I have not any other to think about;" alluding to his profession, which he had made a little before, and by his wife, meaning the cross which he bore on his cassock and mantle. When Camillus heard this, he was very much annoyed, and as he was not then general, he called F. Francesco Romano, the Father Prefect, and made so much of this sentence, which he said was unworthy of a young religious, that the Prefect called him into the presence of the Saint, whom he ordered to rebuke him severely, and then made him take the discipline in the public refectory for a warning to all of them, and to eat nothing but bread and water that day. So particular was Camillus in the slightest shadow that might affect purity.

He avoided all places where there was singing, music,

or dancing; and while he was in church making mental prayer with his religious, if he heard music or singing in the street, he would shake his head, and spit, and cough, and make noises, to prevent the sounds coming to his own or to his companions' ears.

Returning once from Venice to Milan, he had to pass through a village where the peasants were diverting themselves with dancing; the coachman, curious to see the women dance, stopped awhile; but as the shutters of the carriage were shut because of the dust, Camillus could not at first make out why he was stopping; he thought that there was something broken, but when he put out his head and saw the coachman standing on tiptoes looking at the dance, he was very angry, and in the presence of them all gave him a sharp rebuke and made him go on; and after he had reached Milan, he not only dismissed him from his service, but refused to give him the usual drink-money.

The disgust that he felt at impurity was such that he was not able to bridle his zeal against sensual and obscene persons. However noble or powerful they might be, though it might be at the risk of his life, he would always reprove them, whenever he heard them utter a filthy word or saw in them any movement that savored of impurity. I will relate an example of this to which I was a witness.

On Sunday, June 18, 1600, St. Camillus with some of his consulta embarked on the post-boat to go from Ferrara to Venice. There were also clandestinely admitted into the same boat a mother and two beautiful daughters, who went about from town to town procuring their livelihood by infamous means. Camillus, when he had proceeded some distance, became acquainted with this and was so grieved that he used his utmost en-

deavors to find another boat, but as he did not succeed, he begged of two Jesuit Fathers to say something against the filthiness of that sin. Upon this, one of them, who was beyond measure vexed at finding himself in such obscene society, in spite of some dissolute young men who tried to interrupt him with singing and noise, made such an eloquent appeal that the three women were pierced to the heart, and the daughters vowed not to sin again, and the mother not to give them occasion of sinning, at any rate for three days. This vow was pronounced with such real grief that they knelt down weeping in the middle of the boat, and endured all the shame, and the insults, and mockery of the other passengers.

That evening the boat stopped at an inn, where a number of soldiers were quartered, and while Camillus and all his fellow-travelers were sitting at table, these soldiers seized by force the three women, and began dragging them with mirth upstairs, intending to satisfy their brutal lust upon them. Camillus burned with zeal, like another Phinees, at this impious exhibition; he leaped up from the table and stood before the corporal, with his crucifix in his hand; then he presented that sacred sign to the wicked wretch and said to him: "My brother, for the love of this Christ, I beseech you to let these women go." But the brute was infuriated and held up the butt-end of his arquebus and answered him with rage: "What, do you wish to have them with you?" The Saint took no notice either of the brutal answer nor of the danger he was in, for he would willingly have sacrificed his life in so worthy a cause; but he pressed forward with wonderful daring and delivered the women from their hands.

I protest before God that I never before or after this event, saw our holy Father in such danger; for con-

sidering that he was surrounded by armed men, all under the excitement of lust, I feared that not he only but all we his companions would have been cut to pieces. But our Lord God by His grace so visibly assisted His servant that, armed only with the crucifix, he overcame the fury of the soldiers and left them so astounded and powerless that they allowed the three women to be taken away, and could not tell how they had managed to escape from them. But Camillus went straight to the boat, taking with him the three women for safety, saying that he would not stay a moment in that accursed den of sinners, for fear it should be destroyed by fire from heaven.

A case of the same kind happened to him in another journey from Mantua to Ferrara. When he entered the boat, he found there several young men with two immodest women, shamefully using obscene language. Camillus rose up full of zeal, and with his crucifix in his hand gave them all a terrible rebuke, threatening them with the wrath of God and the torments of hell, with such power that the women were terrified and begged to be put on shore, because the voice of that old Father made them feel as if they were in a furnace; and as the boatman objected to this, they cried out and supplicated, so that at last they were left on the bank with the young men who were with them.

Some religious who were present on this occasion declared that as Camillus was speaking, his face sent forth rays like the sun, so that they all venerated him as a saint and knelt at his feet, to recommend themselves to his prayers. Whenever he rebuked the sin of impurity, words of such power came out of his mouth that they seemed arrows of fire, able to inflame the most icy hearts and consciences.

He was not satisfied with only rebuking this vice, without giving proper remedies to prevent it. Besides advising persons to avoid every, even the least, occasion of it and to give themselves to prayer, he taught that the flesh is not easily bridled, except by a continual mortification; and he adopted the words of Jesus Christ: "This kind of devil is not cast out but by prayer and fasting." His exhortation was the more efficacious as it was backed by his example; for though his body was already emaciated by his labors and by the pain of his wound, he exercised it with continual fasts, with discipline, hair shirts, and other instruments of penance. And although God had given him the privilege of being free from all temptations of the flesh, so that he felt no evil desires, yet for all this he did not think himself safe, but always stood on his guard, so that he would not even feel the pulse of sick women, unless their hand was covered with the sheet or with their bed-gown. And he was always so occupied with pious works and labors in the service of the sick that, as F. Lucatelli says, he never gave the devil time to tempt him.

And let no one think that all this caution arose from his unhappy experience of sins committed while he was in the world before his conversion; for although he lived freely as a soldier for some years, yet even then he always kept himself from all impurity, and he felt such disgust at this vice that he could not endure the company of those who were infected with it.

Nor yet can it be said that his avoiding the company of women arose from moroseness of disposition or too great scrupulousness of conscience, for it was caused simply by his deep love of purity and his desire to resemble as much as possible the spotless purity of his own Jesus and his dearest mother Mary. For whenever any work of

charity or any urgent need of his order required it, he was quite another man and conducted himself with religious kindness and most delightful modesty.

I will relate an instance of this that occurred in the convent Torre de' Specchi. The ladies there invited him one day to say Mass for them, and although he had always shown himself unwilling to frequent convents, yet he went there on account of the affection and esteem with which he regarded those devout oblates, whom he used to call his "blessed daughters," both because they provided him with lint for his wound, and used their liberty of going out only for the purpose of visiting their sick and dying friends. So he went there, offered the Holy Sacrifice, and preached to them a learned and fervent sermon, in the sacristy, exhorting them to charity and humility, leaving them delighted at having had the double pleasure of seeing him and of hearing from his mouth such sweet spiritual maxims. Yet it is true that the restraint he placed over himself to conceal his annoyance at these conversations and visits was great, and he usually finished them as soon as possible and turned the conversation to things which called to mind the sick and dying, the hospitals, and other melancholy and frightful subjects, thus gaining the double advantage of caution on his part and edification and compunction in those who listened to him.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Of Camillus's Love for Holy Obedience, and of His Observance of All the Rules of the Community

It might be supposed that Camillus, placed as he was by Providence in stations of command during almost his whole life, had not been able to practice the virtue of

obedience as perfectly as those we have already discussed. But at most this could only apply to that period during which he was general of the order, and even then we shall find instances of wonderful obedience, for besides his being always most exact in the observance of the rules and of community acts, he submitted himself personally to the superiors of all the houses which he visited as general and obeyed his companion in his travels in all things relating to the journey.

But after his resignation he gave most signal examples of this virtue. In whatever house he was staying, he never went out without begging the superior's blessing on his knees. He did the same on returning, and if he could not find the superior in his room or on the first floor, he went upstairs and looked for him all over the house, though he might have left his companion to perform this duty. When he could not find the superior, he abased himself to beg a blessing from the brother sub-minister.

He never sent or received letters without the permission of the same superior. He was most punctual in his obedience to the sacristan and never went down into the sacristy to say Mass until he was called; and in administering Communion to the faithful, and in all other things, he did exactly as he was bid, putting himself entirely at the disposal of others.

So exact was he in everything that after his death several scraps of paper were found containing notes of the permissions he had received from his superiors, written in his own hand; and from these it appeared that he never performed even his virtuous actions except in obedience to the will of his director. On one of these scraps it was written that he had obtained leave not to eat in the evening and to eat no breakfast when he judged it proper;

to offer some Masses for the needs, the benefactors, and the sick of his order; to take the discipline every day; to sleep in his clothes on Friday and Saturday; to allow the Fathers and brothers who wished to speak to him to come into his room, and for him to go into their rooms to speak to them, when they met in the house; to visit the sick religious; to sit at the second table when he was too late for the first; to go on Sundays to hear sermons, and the like.

He was so afraid of having or keeping anything without the merit of obedience that, on the very evening of the day when he resigned the generalship, before he went to bed, he went to the provincial of Rome with a list of the few pieces of furniture he had in his room, and although the provincial told him that he gave him permission to have what he pleased, he would not go till the list had been read and signed.

He obeyed not only his superiors but also his inferiors, as happened in the hospital at Genoa, when he was on guard with a young cleric. Camillus, though an old man, a Father, founder of an order, and ex-general, would submit himself to the cleric, and leave him to arrange their course. On other occasions in Rome and in Milan, he submitted to obey the cook, the porter, and other lay brothers.

It would be too tedious to relate all the facts which have been collected in proof of his minute and exact obedience. It will be sufficient to say that, not only the words and signs of his superiors, but every stroke of the bell, was listened to by Camillus as if it were the voice of God commanding him, so ready and anxious was he to obey. Every one knew how he loved the poor people in the hospital; so one of his religious asked him one day what he would do if the prefect of the house

told him to stay in his room instead of going to the hospital: "Of course, I should obey," he answered, "and leave everything else alone, otherwise I should not be a religious, but a beast."

The tailor once went by order of the superior to measure him for a cloak; the Saint opposed it and said he did not want one; but a brother who was there suggested that he ought not to oppose holy obedience; on hearing this, he threw off his old cloak, saying: "Make me one of velvet if you like, if such is the will of holy obedience."

Nor was he less anxious that his religious should practice obedience in everything. While he was general, he never gave a chapter, he never visited a house, he never addressed the religious, without exhorting them to obedience, telling them that it was the true gate of religion, and threatening the disobedient with the wrath of God, who loves the renouncing of one's own will better than all other mortifications and penances. He used also to say great things of the power of obedience in resisting the devil, who, for this very reason, that the obedient walk in safety and cannot be deceived, is always endeavoring to draw away the minds (of the young and inexperienced especially) from the practice of this virtue, and under the pretense of devotion and fervor alienates them from blessed obedience and makes them follow the caprices of their self-will.

Besides these exhortations, he was most vigilant in finding out the really obedient and most rigorous in rebuking those who failed in this virtue. Once when he was about to go from Naples to Rome, he had told some of his religious to accompany him. One of them, who did not like the journey, pretended to be ill and called in the doctor, who prescribed for him some medicine;

with this excuse he presented himself to Camillus in the evening, telling him the state of his health and what medicines the doctor had prescribed for him; the Saint immediately perceived the state of the case, how all this was a mere pretext to excuse him from obedience; so he said to him in a resolute tone: "Your doctor may have ordered you all these things, but holy obedience orders you a mule, a saddle, a pair of boots, and spurs, and with these you shall tomorrow morning mount and set out for Rome without another word." The religious was immediately cured of all his ailments, and the Saint had the satisfaction of seeing his will so submissive that the next day he mounted his beast and rode with him to Rome in complete health.

Whenever he saw any religious kicking against obedience, he gave him a penance, however advanced he might be in age or dignity. He always weighed his orders well; but when he had once commanded a thing in the name of holy obedience, he never moved, but would be obeyed. Indeed he attributed all religious perfection and the well-being of his congregation to the exercise of this virtue; and he used to say that a religious body, where subordination and obedience are wanting, cannot possibly stand.

A person who was so exact in the virtue of obedience could not be less so in the observance of his rule and of community life; for the first obedience is due to rules, and the principal subjection consists in the observance of community acts; it is an illusion which many fall into, to think to mount to perfection by private ways, while they neglect the actions of the community and make little scruple of breaking the rules, because they

think them unimportant. Not thus did our Saint act. He considered every stroke of the bell to be as the voice of God.

Once he was already dressed to go out, but meeting with two priests, he stayed some time with them, giving them advice on the regulation of their conduct; while he was talking with them, the bell gave notice that it was time for the religious to sweep their rooms. So Camillus cut short the discourse, saying: "My Fathers, excuse me, let us first perform holy obedience," and he left them and went to clean his room.

It was a saying of his, that it was one of the greatest of penances to be contented with the community life, and one of the most acceptable things to God that a religious can perform; for besides cutting off the occasion of vain-glory, that rock so dangerous for spiritual persons, it saves the superior and the whole house many a vexatious disturbance, as experience shows, that in the kitchen of a convent, there is more trouble about a pot of soup for a particular person than about a caldron full for the whole community. Community life was observed by him with the most exemplary punctuality. He was most temperate in his food, and in drinking would never have anything out of the common way. When he was well, he always ate in the refectory and did not dispense with this rule even when his many infirmities required better food. He ate of everything, without caring whether the food was well or ill dressed, done or under-done, seasoned or insipid.

He was always the first to get up when the bell rang, the first at the community prayers, at the conferences, at the examinations of conscience, and at all the other exercises of the community, although when he was general

his business was sufficient to have dispensed him from them.

He was most exact in keeping the rule of silence, and never spoke except from necessity or for edification. It was observed that his words were always well considered and his discourses always on spiritual matters.

In walking, or standing, or sitting, or any other action, he never transgressed the rule of religious dignity and modesty; he would leave whatever he was doing, at the sound of the bell, to go and open the door; indeed, he was a perfect example of the observance of every rule, from the greatest to the least. He kept up this obedience till the very day of his death. That very day he would not receive visits in his room, and when the infirmarian asked him whether he would have a drop of water, he answered, "Wait a quarter of an hour, I intend to be obedient to the last." This he said, because there was a rule which prohibited eating and drinking except at meal times, and, in fact, a quarter of an hour afterwards he expired.

He was, moreover, ever on the watch to make others observe the rules and never left the least transgression of them unpunished. Ten of our lay brothers once took leave to eat something in the hospital of St. Spirito, and Camillus was so angry that he summoned all the religious in chapter, and after having the rules read, he threw the book down (like Moses breaking the tables of the law) and stamped upon it, saying: "What is the use of these rules if they are not kept?" Then he caused the bundles of these transgressors to be brought in, and in the presence of all, sent them away to their own houses.

In the same way he dismissed from the congregation, Giovanni Manriquez, a most learned theologian, and five others, simply because they had spoken of forming a

private association for the assistance of soldiers dying in war. On other occasions he sent away excellent subjects for having spoken to strangers without leave, or for having received letters without the knowledge of their superiors, or for having talked together during the time of silence.

He often made unexpected visits to the kitchen, or refectory, or lavatory, and if he found silence broken, he imposed a penance on the culprits; so to avoid this danger, both the cooks and the other lay brothers in the offices, when they had but one hand employed, held their rosary with the other, and when both hands were engaged, they recited psalms and prayers.

He observed once that a lay brother did not bow his head when the Gloria was said at grace after dinner; he therefore obliged him to carry for several days a heavy piece of wood round his neck to remind him. He used to say that when the rules were not perfectly observed in any house, the superior ought to be punished as the author of the evil. He added that, besides continual vigilance, superiors should always have "honey in their mouth and a razor in their hand."

In Genoa, one day, he heard a religious complaining that all he got for dinner was a bone. Camillus turned to him and with a serious voice reproved him: "Oh, what poor living! Is it this you complain of? You are not worthy to be here." With these words he went out of the room and would not return.

He never would have, or let any one else have, anything singular. Once a relative of his in Bocchianico sent him a brace of partridges, the first of the season, begging that he would eat them all himself. He accepted them willingly, had them roasted, and divided them among the religious. If he came to know that any one had private

property in his room, he obliged him to give it to the superior and imposed a penance on him.

In the rules on religious modesty he was always most rigorous with regard to himself; whether in dressing or undressing, or in any other action, he was always so modest that he never allowed any part of his body to be seen naked; with regard to others, he was most vigilant and made unexpected visits to the school, the corridors, and the rooms, and if he saw any one not decently clothed, or unbuttoned, or in an improper position, he rebuked him sharply. He used to tell his religious that even when they were alone in their rooms, they should remember that they were in the presence of God and of their angel-guardian. Such was the heroic zeal of Camillus for the virtue of obedience and the observance of every rule of community life.

This zeal of his may make some persons suppose that he was an ill-tempered man; but they are wrong, for his heart was in reality all goodness. His creditors found this out when they went to him to have their large claims satisfied; if when they went in they thought him a little rough, they changed their opinion altogether before they came out. This happened to some merchants, to whom, after making the proper excuses in the softest way, he said: "Is it possible, my brethren, to get money out of this wall? Just as easily can you get it out of me at present; pray God to send us some." And the same occurred to another merchant, whom he spoke to with such gentleness that the man went away astonished and saying to himself: "I go away quite satisfied, but without my money."

Here we may mention in passing that, though Camillus was often compelled to be a bad payer, yet he enjoyed such credit that the very merchants to whom he owed

large sums would have trusted all their capital to him; and however rough and severe he was thought to be, yet, at last, not only his creditors acknowledged him to be gentle and kind, but also his own erring children, after they had come to themselves and saw their fault. Besides, he had a wonderful power of consoling persons in temptation; by laying his hand on their head, he could disperse all the clouds of trouble and lukewarmness. In his familiar conversations he was merry and cheerful, and had an especial love for those religious who served their Lord with cheerfulness; and to this he joined a modesty and dignity of demeanor, which compelled every one to regard him with a respect equal to his love.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Humility of St. Camillus, and His Spirit of Mortification and Penance

This spirit of obedience and subjection to all his superiors, and even inferiors, which we have been speaking of in the last chapter, arose from his profound humility, which made him hold himself in supreme contempt, and think nothing of his talents or any other quality which might exalt him above other men; on the other hand, he considered himself as last of all and only fit to be trodden under foot. For this reason he sought every occasion to humble himself and eagerly embraced the lowest offices and duties.

It was an ordinary thing for him to wash the dishes in the kitchen and to wait at table in the refectory. And although he was general, and an old man, yet when his religious accompanied the dead from the hospital to the cemetery, it was his delight to carry the cross like a lay-

man, and even to act as one of the coffin-bearers. He never allowed any one to wait upon him in his room, except when he was too ill to do it himself; but he often went to the infirmary of the community to fill the office of infirmarian.

One day he saw his companion in the hospital of St. Spirito cleaning his room and hanging the bandages of his leg in the air to dry and doing other menial offices for him; so he said: "Brother, leave that for me to do, and attend you to the service of the poor." But the brother answered that in serving him he thought he was serving the poorest man in the hospital; the Saint was highly delighted to be esteemed but as one of the poor people and answered: "If this is the case, I do not wish to hinder your meritorious work, but take care not to do anything because I am founder, for that would be a great temptation; but do it simply as you would do it for any other sick and needy neighbor, and if done thus, I accept it and thank you for your charity."

Some gentlemen who were very fond of him went to the hospital to ask him to accompany them on a visit to the Seven Churches, so he went up to his room to take off his cloth apron; but his companion, seeing that his cassock was all torn and patched, said to him: "Father, are you going in these clothes with the gentlemen?" "O brother," said he, "thou art very simple; it is of very little consequence whether the clothes be old or new. It is not a good dress that makes a good religious. I wish my heart to be pure and to be in the grace of God, for these are the things which make a good religious." Hence, he did not care in the least about walking through Rome with a sack on his back, although his friends often blamed him for it, particularly Cardinal Salviati, the protector, one day when he met him in the streets thus bur-

dened, stopped his carriage and scolded him for employing himself in a way that degraded his office of general.

But our greatest confusion was to see him after his resignation, old as he was, and the founder of the order, and having been so many years superior of all, kneeling down with the rest and telling his faults or his ordinary defects, and then receiving and performing the penances imposed on him by the superiors, who were generally young men, admitted and educated in the order by himself.

He never shrank from any employment, however mean; if they were building, there was Camillus carrying mortar, or bricks, or stone. If there was a wash, there was he washing the linen or hanging it in the sun. If anything came to the house, he would go out into the street and fetch it in, whatever it was. One of the religious one day begged him not to tire himself with these works, but to leave others to think of them, but he answered: "God would not be pleased if I were to avoid the common employments, for my superiority ought to be in virtue, not in exemptions."

Going to the hospital with his food for the day, he used to help his companion to carry the basket and tie it to his girdle, without caring whether any one could see it, when he saluted any cardinal or prelate whom he met.

Once it happened on the bridge of St. Angelo that a bottle of wine which his companion was carrying under his cloak for their use was broken by a man who was running along with a pole in his hand, and all the wine spilt; this accident was very annoying, yet Camillus only smiled and said: "Ah, Chiappino, Chiappino (this was the name he used to call the devil), you shall not beat us;

this shall not prevent our going to the hospital this evening."

Such was his disregard of appearances and the poor-ness of his clothes that, except for the cross on his cloak, he might have been mistaken for one of the foreign priests who come to Rome to beg. Such, indeed, was the opinion they had of him in the sacristy of St. Michele in Borgo, where Camillus went to say Mass on Michaelmas day; after it was finished, the sacristan put into his hand the usual alms of a paolo; Camillus did not receive it, but modestly thanked him for his charity and said that on that occasion it was not necessary.

I have already said that nothing but holy obedience could make him get new clothes. Once in Rome, when he was returning home in the carriage of a great lady, which she had sent to take him, he heard the voice of a poor servant, who was crying out: "I am very ill, and no one believes me." He at once ordered the carriage to stop, and turning to the servant, he begged him to get up into the carriage with him; and as the man refused, he begged him more earnestly, saying: "Do not be ashamed, my brother, come in, for I am not a man of quality, but a poor person." But as the servant absolutely refused to get up, he left him, but with such ill-will that he kept calling to him as long as he was in sight, in hopes that he would comply.

He had such a low opinion of himself that he thought himself the greatest sinner in the world and often called himself "a firebrand of hell." One day he met in Rome an old man with whom he was acquainted, who said to him: "O happy Father Camillus, you are the founder of an order; you are always going to serve the sick in the hospitals: you go to assist the dying night and day; you go to the prisons to console the afflicted; but all that you

have done, and all that you will do, will be of no use unless you die in the grace of God." Camillus had become red and uneasy at the commencement of this speech, but when he heard the end, he became quite calm and answered: "It is so, it is so, dearest brother," and humbly thanked him for the useful admonition. Then he turned to his companion and said to him: "Did you hear, brother, what this good man said? Oh, how truly did he speak! For, not he that begins, but he that perseveres to the end, shall be saved, and so let us pray God to give us perseverance till death."

Another time a poor man saw him in Rome and began crying out at the top of his voice: "Long live Father Camillus!" The humble servant of God was surprised and said: "What ails you, brother? Be quiet; what have I done?" The poor man answered with a louder voice: "If I were to live a hundred years more, I would always be crying out, 'Long live Father Camillus,' for the obligation which I owe to you. Do you not remember, Father, when you were superintendent in St. Giacomo degli Incurabili, that I had a broken thigh, and when every remedy had failed, you cured me at once by your prayers?" The Saint was more confused than ever and ordered him to be silent, telling him that not he but Almighty God had cured him; but for all that, the good man would not cease crying: "Long live Father Camillus," so the Saint, without looking up, went away as fast as he could, and when he had got far enough off, he turned to his companion and said: "Look at the memory of this man; it is perhaps thirty-five years since he was ill in St. Giacomo, and the instruments were all ready under the bed, to cut off his limb, and God healed him. In short, man always remembers anything good that is done to him. So let us do good, brother, that God may do so to us."

A certain religious who was conversing with him expressed great astonishment and admiration that he, a private man and a soldier, should have had the spirit and courage to found an order. Camillus could not endure this praise, but answered him with great warmth: "My Father, there is nothing to wonder at, for all has proceeded from the mighty hand of God, who has made use of a firebrand of hell: but, perhaps, the good God will quench this firebrand and cause that it should be no more for hell. I have hope that He will do so for His mercy."

Another said that he had good cause to be happy in seeing his order so enlarged and extended in so short a time. He replied: "These thoughts have never entered my mind, nor have I ever congratulated myself on this account; but, full of confusion, I have given continual thanks to God, the Author of all good." Some persons were complimenting him, saying how happy they were in having seen and known him. And what have you known," said he, "but a cripple and a monster?"

Once on his return from Bocchianico to Rome, weary as he was with the journey, without any rest he went the same evening to the hospital of St. Spirito and watched there the whole night. This fatigue, added to his austerities and his infirmities, compelled him to return to the Maddalena and take to his bed. This illness displayed the depth of his humility; for he called his confessor and begged him to hear his general confession; but the confessor, seeing that his tongue was parched with fever and that he could speak only with great difficulty, advised him to spare himself that trouble, assuring him that there was no need of it, as he had made it several times before. But the Saint began to proclaim publicly the sins which he had committed when he was in the world, without regard to several of our Fathers who were present and

heard him; and not content with this public confession, he spent all the rest of the night in groaning and sighing, often repeating: "Give me, O Lord, true contrition for my sins, and pardon me, a great sinner."

He recovered from this illness, but he never ceased to maintain the same sentiments and kept saying to every one: "I am a great sinner and deserve hell," and other such words of confusion and humiliation. Moreover, although he was gifted with such light and knowledge, he thought himself so ignorant that after he had resigned the office of general, at the age of sixty years, he bought Cardinal Bellarmine's little book on Christian Doctrine, and read and studied it every day, as a child or an ignorant rustic might have done.

He also wished his religious to be well-grounded in the same virtue of humility and frequently gave them beautiful instructions upon it. One day he heard them talking of a certain priest who was in great trouble through some spiritual illusions; he broke out into sighs and said: "O my Fathers, what a good thing it is to walk in the beaten track, which is to keep the commandments of God and to practice the true virtues, and especially charity and humility."

He often repeated to his religious the saying of Jesus Christ: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart," and said that these were the two virtues that were most pleasing to God and made us His true friends. He also often required them to perform external acts of humility, to exercise them in this lovely virtue, such as to wash the filthy bandages of the sick, to clean the vessels, and the like. The proud and arrogant got on very badly with him, as they were obliged anyhow to humble themselves, for when the glory of God was concerned, he would admit no excuse nor make any account of any

repugnance to the commands or penances he imposed, and so he overcame every obstacle.

A religious of his was asked by a sick man in the hospital to do for him an act of charity which was highly repugnant to the senses. Camillus thought that he set about it with a very ill-will, so he immediately went into his place and said with a severe manner to the obstinate religious: "Know that neither you nor I am worthy to do this office of love." After he had fully performed it, the sick man began to thank him; but Camillus went down on his knees before him and said: "My brother, I ought to thank you for the good occasion which you have given me, and therefore give thanks to God, and not to me." Nor would he rise from his knees till the sick man had thanked God; this was the way in which he put to shame and confusion that too delicate Servant of the Sick.

His contempt of himself, and his profound humility, which made him think he deserved any punishment, however severe, produced in St. Camillus that spirit of mortification and penance which made him truly admirable. Hence, although he would not impose on his religious any more fasts than those of the Church, because of the hard work they had to perform in assisting the sick, yet he was so rigorous in observing these that one might call him even scrupulous.

He would not trust the house clock, but often sent some one to look at the city clock, to tell him the precise time, so that he might not eat a moment before the time. At the evening collation he used to weigh the bread in his hand, so as not to let it exceed three ounces, such being the quantity he allowed himself; and he never exceeded this even while he was traveling, although he knew that it was the common opinion that persons traveling for

necessity or charity were not strictly bound to fast. Not to infringe this determination, he would sometimes have the bread weighed with scales; and once when he was traveling from Milan to Genoa, he wanted the hostess to weigh out portions for himself and his companions, as it was the evening of a fast-day, but as she had only a pair of wooden scales, with stone weights, she could not make out three ounces; but as Camillus still insisted, she was quite tired and said, "O Father, weigh it yourself, for I cannot, I don't know how." From that time, whenever he had to travel on a fast-day, he carried in his bag his bread ready cut and weighed.

Once as he was sailing into Sicily, some gentlemen asked him into their cabin to eat his collation with them on a vigil; and when he saw that the table was covered with a variety of dishes, he went away in a hurry and said to his companion: "Don't let the devil deceive you, to make you sit down at that table," and he made his collation elsewhere, leaving the gentlemen edified and re-proved.

He would never neglect Lent or omit a fast, however bad it might be for him. Once he fasted in spite of a fever with which he was laid up for three days; and in another Lent he would persist in eating salt fish, which was very bad for him, though he was ill with fever a whole week, and it required the authority of the doctor and the power of holy obedience to make him take a little broth on Holy Saturday. Many persons criticized his exceeding rigor and accused him of trifling; but he let every one think as he chose, and declared that he could not drink muddy water, adding that the very key of Paradise is, "not to be satisfied with avoiding sin, but to avoid even the least shadow and risk of sin."

Nor did he restrict his rigor to the fasts of the Church; it may be said that he was always fasting, so abstemious was he in his food; he would never drink except at meal-time, though he suffered greatly from thirst: he tried to make his food bad and insipid; he would often return too late from the hospital and find his dinner quite cold — then he would warm it in the sun, saying: "Camillus serves his body as well as he can." It was his constant principle that he had learned in the school of Cassian, that no one could think of advancing in other virtues who had not learned to mortify his palate.

Equally great was his mortification of the other senses; he willingly endured the heat and cold, and other inclemencies of the weather. Once in Genoa he refused to come near the fire in recreation time, though the weather was bitterly cold, saying: "If I go and warm myself, every one will make way for me out of respect, and so they will not be able to get warm. It is not fit that many should suffer for one; so it is better that I should suffer alone."

He usually sat in his room without a fire, half frozen. In the middle of summer he would walk to the hospital in the heat of the day. It often happened that, as he was going at night to assist the sick or on his travels, he was overtaken by a storm of hail or heavy rain; but he never complained or showed any signs of annoyance.

He protested that he had no greater enemy in the world than his body; he called it his "vile body, brother jackass, a sack of worms," and treated it as badly as he could. He disciplined himself every day, he always wore a hair-shirt, and a small chain full of hooks, fastened round the body. He slept very little and uncomfortably, and often passed the whole night watching by the side of a sick man or in prayer before his crucifix. He was al-

ways putting himself in the way of suffering some inconvenience or fatigue, were it even beyond his power, especially if it was in the service of the sick. Although the wound in his leg was extremely painful, yet so far from trying to alleviate it, he would even irritate it by stamping on the ground, or taking long walks, or riding, which was very distressing to him.

This mode of living he kept up to the last, never giving himself a moment's rest, and yet in his old age he not only bore all without a murmur, but even said with tears: "I have not done anything yet; I have not begun to serve God yet. I pray the Lord to make me drag on this vile body during the few days that remain to me, and to consume it in the service of the poor." At other times he would sigh and say: "Many can serve God in sweetness, but the thing is to serve Him in affliction of body and mind. Oh, what a strict account have we to render in that last moment, which decides whether we lose such infinite glory, and whether we gain eternal damnation. If it were possible, men ought never to sleep, but always be laboring and suffering for the glory of God."

He was very much displeased when any one in pity for his infirmities tried to ease him of some suffering or fatigue; one night the brother who had to wake him to go and watch the sick, seeing him so weak and weary, left him sleeping; but in the morning Camillus reproved him, saying: "God forgive you, my brother; when will you have me do any good, as you have made me lose this night, without spending it in the service of the poor?" Such was his desire of suffering even till his last moments.

He often exhorted his religious to embrace the spirit of mortification and to suffer willingly, especially for the service of the poor; and reminded them of the saying

of St. Francis of Assisi: "The good that I expect is so great that all pain is a delight to me." Again he would say: "How delighted you will be, my brother, to see yourself one day sitting in one of those blessed seats in heaven, and to hear on the day of judgment those sweet words from the mouth of Jesus Christ: 'I was sick and you visited Me: come, ye blessed.' Why then are you now disgusted with work? Why do you not take pains and labor? Why do you not chastise this body of yours, which tomorrow may be only a bag of worms? I am not telling you fables, my brother, but things which you would see tonight if you were to die."

If he found one of his religious who showed signs of weariness or complained of fatigue, he called him a fresh-water sailor drowned in a pitcher of water; and if he heard that one of them did not like trouble, he chastised him severely.

Once he took his religious to a vineyard for recreation; while he was employed in spiritual conversation, he was told that a brother had made a flute of some reeds and was piping through the walks. He was so annoyed that he spoiled the whole of the recreation: "How is it possible," he kept saying, "that a Servant of the Sick should walk about a vineyard playing the flute?" He ordered him to be called, gave him a severe rebuke in the presence of all, and made him take the discipline on the spot as a penance.

He was very particular about the education of the young, and did not wish their spiritual fervor to be cooled by scientific studies, nor their love of mortification and other virtues decreased by it; he used sometimes to quote the words of a companion of St. Francis: "O Paris,

Paris, you have cooled my love for Assisi." And if he ever saw them at all relaxing from their mortifications, he rebuked them very severely.

In the same proportion as he disliked the languid and remiss, so did he love and esteem mortified and magnanimous spirits, who had courage to undertake great and difficult tasks. Once he met in the house Fermo Calvi, his old friend and benefactor. "Good morning, Messer Fermo," said he; "God give you a place in Paradise." "I hope God will, in His mercy, my Father," said Fermo. Camillus answered: "Think well, speak well, do well; these three things, through the mercy of God, will make a man go to heaven."

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Camillus's Patience in Misfortunes and His Modesty in Traveling — Some Wonderful Succors Which God Gave Him in Different Dangers

We have devoted a former chapter to the relating of the patience and fortitude with which Camillus bore his five different infirmities, which he used to call the five mercies of God. We will now speak of his patience in enduring for the love of God the numerous mortifications which he received from the servants and officials of the hospitals, especially when he asked for anything that the sick needed.

In one hospital he was threatened that all his things should be turned out of window unless he took himself off. In another it was said to him that people were fond of playing with bullets in that town; not to mention the fierce persecutions that he had continually to bear from the hands of the malevolent and envious, and of those

who wished to hinder the progress of his congregation. But Camillus was like a rock, never disturbed, always constant, always joyful, never angry, never uttering a word of complaint.

His patience was exercised in numerous other ways, which it would be tedious to enumerate. I will here set down a few. One Saturday, near midnight, he was returning from the hospital in the Via delle Carozze, when he turned in to a shop to have his tonsure cut. His companion was holding the light and, being half asleep, upset the scalding wax over Camillus's bald head, where it stuck so firmly to the skin that it was several days before it came off. In spite of the pain, the only resentment he showed was to say with a smile: "What a simpleton you are, brother."

Once again he was asked by a sick countryman to assist him in something he wanted, but the man explained himself so badly that Camillus could not possibly make out what he said, so the poor man got quite angry and let out a torrent of abuse against the Saint; but he was quite unmoved and with his usual quietness called some other persons to try if they could understand him; then he showed him several things, to see if he could guess what he wanted; at last he made it out and assisted him with great tenderness and attention, and afterwards he humbly begged his pardon for having been so slow to understand him.

Whenever he fell from his horse (a frequent occurrence with him), in spite of the pain of his leg, so far from complaining, he did nothing but thank God and comfort his companions by assuring them that there was no harm done. Some noblemen in Genoa advised him to take more care of himself and, with such a wound in his leg, not to engage in such long, laborious, and fre-

quent journeys. He told them that the only thing he thought of was God's glory, for the increase of which he should esteem it a great happiness to die in a ditch.

On another occasion he was asked how many falls from his horse he had had in his travels; and he answered: "The minor tumbles, unattended with danger, have been so many that I cannot remember the number; but I have had at least thirty dangerous ones, where I might have been killed, always having fallen with my wounded leg under the horse; but here I have ever found the hand of God over me, to protect me from all injury. When I felt excessive pain, I had only to lift up my eyes to heaven and offer it all to our Lord, and I felt immediate relief."

The physicians told him to try the baths of Ischia for his wound; as he was going there, he ran his leg against a mill-stone and made it bleed profusely, with great agony to himself; all his companions were lamenting his misfortune, but Camillus, with the greatest tranquillity, instead of uttering a word of complaint, set himself to console them.

On another occasion his horse fell under him, near Acquapendente, and crushed his leg, so that his boot was filled with blood, and the road was sprinkled with it; but so far was Camillus from allowing a groan to escape his lips that he did nothing but bless and thank God.

Camillus undertook journeys without ever thinking of himself; it was nothing to him whether the weather was good or bad, whether the road was dangerous, or the accommodation inconvenient; on the contrary, he always chose the worse part for himself and left the better for his companion; so that if there was only one bed in an inn, he had the straw paillasse spread on the ground

for himself, and obliged his companion by an express command to use the bed and mattress.

And as we have mentioned the sufferings Camillus went through in his journeys, it will not be out of place to mention also his conduct and edifying modesty in the inns where he had to put up. Immediately he came to the inn where he was to stay, he asked for his room and at once converted it into an oratory; then he recited the Office with his companions, and they said the litanies together, made their examination of conscience, and performed everything that is usually done in the house of the order. At mealtime he had some spiritual book read (usually the works of F. Louis of Granada) or if there was no one to read, kept silence. He never lifted up his eyes to look either at the persons who were staying there or at the wall, for fear of seeing some indecent figure or word, such as too often travelers scribble on the walls of inns. He rebuked with holy liberty any one who dared to utter an indelicate word; and such was his gravity and modesty that he moved all to devotion, and when he entered an inn, all dissoluteness disappeared.

The inns that he preferred were those the rooms of which were ornamented with devout pictures of the Madonna or of the saints; and although they might be otherwise inconvenient and uncomfortable, yet he would make a long day's journey to reach them at night. He professed a peculiar liking for the innkeeper at Serravalle, because he had hung up such pictures in all the rooms and had also furnished the rooms with a little vessel of holy water. He affiliated him to his order and ordered all his religious who might be journeying through that province to put up at his house.

While he was traveling in a carriage or on horse-back with others, he always kept silence, and never broke

it, but to say the rosary or to speak of heavenly things. Nor could one speak of anything else in his presence, for his look inspired veneration and piety. If on his travels he had to pass through a town where there was a hospital, with all his traveling gear, and his spurs on his heels, he would conduct his fellow travelers to visit it and would find time to say something to console the sick.

His exemplary and edifying conduct could not but move the goodness of God to favor him with many special graces, for which Camillus was never tired of thanking Him; we will devote the next chapter to his remarkable deliverances, only relating in this one of the principal ones, that Camillus most often mentioned.

In the year 1589, he was going from Rome to Naples with F. Paul Corneta and others of his religious. F. Paul fell ill on the way, and as he could not ride, it was necessary for them to finish their journey by sea. They embarked, therefore, in a Neapolitan felucca, which had anchored in company with another at the mouth of the Garigliano. As soon as morning dawned, the master of this other felucca wished to set sail instantly; but the master of the one in which Camillus and his companions were, declared that he would not stir till he saw that the sea was clear of Turkish pirates; and so firm was he that neither the prayers of the sailors, nor the arguments of the passengers, nor the authority of Camillus, who wished to get to his journey's end, could move him. His companion, therefore, set sail but he had not gone half a mile before he was taken by the Turks and he and his sailors and passengers made slaves. Then Camillus saw how merciful God had been to him in inspiring the master of the felucca with that unusual caution, which was the salvation of himself and his companions. Camillus never

mentioned this without declaring it to be one of the most signal favors he had ever received from God.

He used also to relate two other dangers that he had run into at Bocchianico: the first was, that as he was walking out of the sacristy with the chalice to say Mass, as the server rang the bell, which was a very large one, it fell down at Camillus's feet, so that if he had taken another step, it would have been the last he could ever have made. The other was, that our house there was very old, and over one of the windows there was an arch of bricks quite separated from the wall; yet, as for eighteen years it had given no signs of moving, the religious persuaded themselves that it was not dangerous, and generally stood under it to say their Office. Camillus had stood under it one day for some hours, and he had no sooner gone away from it, than down came the arch with such violence that if he had been there he must have been killed on the spot.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Other Dangers from Which Camillus Was Delivered by God

Camillus ran so many risks in his travels and was so often delivered by God's goodness that I cannot but believe that God had commanded His holy angels to carry him in their hands and to keep him in all His ways. And His ways certainly were those which Camillus traveled, for the purpose of visiting the houses of the order, for the glory of God, and the spiritual improvement of the order.

The first time after the establishment of the order that he went to visit the holy house of Loreto, he was in com-

pany with Curzio Lodi. On his return he fell from his horse in the city of Spoleto and was seized with such an agony in his wounded leg that he could not ride any more and was obliged to travel in a couple of panniers, himself in one, and Cürzio in the other, as far as Narni, where he procured a litter, in which he went all the way to Rome. But this accident was quite providential in its effects; for though he was utterly unknown in Spoleto, as he fell he called upon the name of God, and a man named Ignazio Cappellaro came to him out of his shop, took him into his house, and treated him with as great kindness as if he had been his brother or his friend. When Curzio told him who Camillus was and how he had founded an order, he was so delighted that ever after he lodged and hospitably entertained any of our Fathers who happened to be passing that way.

On another occasion as he was returning from the holy house of Loreto in a carriage with some of his religious, in descending a mountain the horses became restive and ran away; the coachman pulled the reins so hard that they broke in pieces, so he jumped off the box to save himself; the horses became furious and rushed down the steep descent, and the companions of Camillus gave themselves up for dead men, especially as the year before another carriage had been run away with down the same place and all the passengers were killed; Camillus alone, full of confidence in God and in the most holy Virgin, animated them not to doubt, but that God would help them; and so it was, for the horses miraculously stopped of their own accord, though the place was so steep, and though they were running at full speed, with a heavy carriage behind them pushing them on.

Again he was traveling from Bologna to Ferrara with some novices and with two Dominican monks: night

came on, and they were overtaken by such a storm of rain that none of them could remember the like. They tried to find shelter in a neighboring homestead, but the countryman would not open the door to them; then Camillus and those who were with him had recourse to prayer; immediately there came to them a beautiful youth, who said that he was the farmer, and seeing so many religious wet through, he at once opened the door, made them bring in their horses and carriage, and provided them with fire and supper and beautiful beds, leaving them in doubt whether he was an angel or a man. In the morning, after thanking their benefactor, they departed; their way lay over a wooden bridge, which appeared dangerous to St. Camillus, so he told the coachman to stop and let him down: and when the Dominicans declared that there was no danger, he said, that he "did not like to tempt God," so got down. The carriage went on over the bridge, when on a sudden one of the wheels ran over the side, and they would all have been upset in deep water, had not Camillus from behind called on God to help them, and cried out to the coachman to stop, so as to let the passengers get down and so save their lives: for this grace the Dominicans thanked God and Camillus most heartily, and from that time they held him in greatest esteem and veneration.

On another occasion as Camillus was traveling from Bocchianico to Naples, his mule stepped upon a mass of ice and fell down with Camillus's wounded leg under him, which hurt him so much that it was forty days before he recovered; at the time of this accident his companion was not near him, for he had gone on before, but a Canon of St. John Lateran and his servant supplied his place with great kindness, lifted Camillus up, and helped him to get on his mule again: in the meantime night came

on, and as none of them knew the right road, Camillus prayed to God, and his prayer was immediately answered; for they met a poor boy without shoes or stockings, to whom they promised to give a pair of shoes if he would show them the way. Thus was Camillus rescued from a position which might have been his death, considering the darkness of the night, the roughness of the road, the severe cold, and the pain of his crushed and wounded leg. Camillus used to declare that he believed that the boy was an angel from Paradise; for while he was leading his mule he had seen his hair sparkle like threads of burnished gold.

In another journey through Abruzzo with two of his religious, they found the road and the plain completely covered with snow and did not know which way they were to go. Camillus as usual invoked the assistance of God; they then heard a voice crying out several times: "Stop, stop;" yet as they could see no one, they were doubtful whether to go on or to stop, when a countryman with a yoke of oxen came up to them and told them that if they had gone four steps farther they would have been smothered in a deep ditch which was covered up with snow; they thanked God and their charitable director, and begged him to guide them, and they would pay him handsomely. But he would do no more than point out the way to them, and so he stayed behind and utterly disappeared, to the great astonishment of all three; and when they reflected that it was not the season of ploughing or of doing any other work in which oxen were necessary, they concluded that it must have been an angel, sent to them by God under that form to preserve them.

In the year 1606 on his return from Genoa to Rome with five of his religious, they missed the way and got

into a place where the horses were up to their bellies in water. So they said to Camillus: "This is not a road at all, we shall all be drowned." Then Camillus lifted up his eyes to heaven, spread out his hands, and exclaimed: "O Lord, thou seest our danger, do not abandon us." Then suddenly a young man on horseback appeared to them and said: "Where are you going, Fathers? Do not stir a step farther, or you will be lost." Then he laid hold of the bridle of Camillus's horse, conducted him to a safe place, and disappeared without giving him time to say a word of thanks. Every one felt certain that it was an angel sent by God to deliver them; for as they were in the midst of a vast plain and had seen nothing of the person either before or after, they thought it impossible that a man, especially on horseback, could have disappeared from their sight.

A similar thing occurred to him when he was traveling the same road with two of his religious. On the plain of Acquapendente his horse fell on him, so that he could not move; he invoked the name of God, and there came out four country people, who lifted him up, together with the horse, without moving him from his saddle, and immediately disappeared, so that though the country was quite flat, he never saw them again.

On another journey they came to a place where several ways met, and as he did not know the right one, he prayed to God and then said to his companion: "Let us shut our eyes and spur our horses, and God will put us on the right road," and so it was.

Two similar cases of not knowing the way occurred to him in the Abruzzi. In the first he made the sign of the cross and said: "O God, come to my assistance" (Ps. 69:1), and then turned to his companion, and said: "Come, this is our road." In the second he bent down

over the saddle-bow in prayer for a few moments and then pointed out the road to his companion, and it turned out to be best.

In returning from Bocchianico to Rome he had to pass the Mount Caruso, where there is almost always danger from the high winds. When he passed it was blowing so violently that he could hardly breathe, indeed he was so far gone that he had scarcely breath enough left to articulate the name of Jesus; but the Lord delivered him from this danger also, by inspiring him with the thought of getting off his horse and creeping along on his hands and feet till he got into a less exposed part of the road.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Camillus's Continual Prayer — His Devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints

This readiness of God to hear our Saint in all his difficulties (which may be seen from the last chapter) was produced by the spirit of prayer which reigned in him and by the faith with which he prayed. For he was most zealous in worshiping God and incredibly exact in everything which regarded religion. He spent the greater part of both day and night in prayer, in reading, and meditation; nor could all the works of piety and mercy in which he was daily engaged distract his mind from the consideration of any of the eternal truths.

In all his travels he never once omitted the mental prayer prescribed by the rule. He made it every morning with his crucifix in his hand, and at intervals he threw on the same crucifix glances of the most loving devotion; and, oh, how were his affections inflamed when he had

to pass through a wood or any solitary place! Then he would make his companions make their mental prayer, and in order that they might spend there the proper time of one hour, he always traveled with an hourglass. He usually prayed with his hands joined, or with his arms extended at the feet of the crucifix, and chiefly before that which had separated its hands from the cross, and spoken to him in his troubles at the commencement of the congregation (see Book I, Chapter X). His devotion was so excited by this image that he was often seen pouring forth floods of tears before it.

He frequently offered to the Eternal Father the bitter passion of His Son, for the sins of the whole world and for the necessities of Holy Church. His principal petition, which he made most importunately, was that he would cleanse his soul from every stain of sin and bring it back to its state of baptismal innocence; at the same time he took every pains to keep himself from even the slightest shadow of sin. He did not court sublime flights in his prayer, but shut himself up in the wounded side of Jesus, and there, like a tender dove in its nest in the ruins, he employed himself in sweet colloquies with his Lord and in beseeching Him to grant him every grace. Dead to everything of the world and living only to glorify the goodness of God, he never sought delight or sweetness in his prayers, but his whole intention was directed to gain new strength to spend in his grand undertaking of saving souls.

It is impossible to say how a man with a wounded leg, and with callosities on his knees like sharp bones, could remain so long kneeling without any support. He often prostrated himself on the tombs of the dead, and in reference to them, said in his discourses, "Oh, if these Fathers and brothers who lie here could return to this

world, how fervent, how particular would they be, what lovers of the poor! and I, ungrateful that I am, am not so; I think not about them; labor wearies and disgusts me!"

He often recommended his religious not to forget to pray for the benefactors of the order, living and dead, for the souls in purgatory, for those who were living in mortal sin, and principally for those who were in their agony. He said more than once that every one of our Fathers, without leaving his own room, might be present by prayer and recommend the soul of every person in the world who was in his agony.

He was anxious that all his religious should be men of prayer, and wished that, whether they were at home, in the hospitals, or in the streets, their thoughts should always be occupied with some devout subject. He used to say, "Woe to that religious who is contented with his morning's mental prayer, and remains all the rest of the day with his mind distracted here and there; such a one in the evening will find his hands full of flies and wind." Indeed, he wished that the body only should be occupied with external exercises, and that the soul should always, as far as possible, be kept united internally with God.

Once when he was instructing the lay brothers in this necessary virtue, he gave them the following advice: "My brothers, when you are praying, if you feel any devotion or spiritual consolation, thank God for it. If not, do not be discouraged, but think always that for some defect or other you have not deserved it. But never, because you feel dry and weary, must you leave off praying; rather you ought then to persevere more than ever; and although you seem not to be able to recollect yourself, yet, force yourself, and do one of these three things, either say the rosary, or fix your eyes on the crucifix, or, when this does

not answer, do nothing but fight against, and drive from your mind, all vain and idle thoughts; and if the whole hour of prayer should be passed in this conflict, know that it would be well spent and that God would be very greatly pleased to see you fight so manfully."

And we may easily see how much Camillus's prayers availed with God, by the wonderful answers which He made to them; I shall devote the next book to this subject, here I will mention only two instances. On the 26th of April, 1583, while he was still in the world and superintendent in the hospital of St. James, the people rose up against the police, because some Roman gentlemen had been murdered. Two of the poor fellows, who were pursued by a yelling mob, ran into the hospital and begged Camillus to save them. He was moved with compassion and took them down into a cellar, where he covered them with faggots and wood. When the people heard of it, they collected with drawn swords before the gate of the hospital, demanding the two miserable policemen, that they might massacre them. Camillus went out to them and tried every means to persuade them to pardon the two poor innocent men, who had taken sanctuary in the house of God. He saw, however, that they were deaf to his prayers, so he retired to the little church of St. James, fell down before the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and with tears in his eyes and a heart full of confidence, besought her not to allow such a spiteful murder to take place in that house. He had scarcely finished, before he felt internally sure that he should obtain his petition. He got up, presented himself again before the mob, and offered himself in exchange for the policemen, and the Blessed Virgin put such eloquence into his mouth, and such tears in his eyes, that the persecutors could not resist him any longer, and were at last appeased, while the two poor

fellows, who had all this time been nearly dead with terror, were allowed to return unmolested to their houses.

In the year 1590 we had a novice in Rome named Goffredo Stella, of noble birth, and endowed with talents which made us expect great things of him, but who felt such disgust at touching and seeing the sick, or their beds, that once when he put his hand where they had been spitting, he shook it about as if he had touched a red-hot coal. Still he had persevered for thirteen months, always combating against the repugnance, which doubtless was a temptation of the devil; but as he could endure it no longer, he determined to leave the congregation and go to the monks of Monte Cassino. He asked Camillus's leave to do this, who, as he loved him much on account of his rare gifts, did all he could to make him stay. But all the Saint's exhortations and prayers were in vain; he was obliged to restore him his secular dress and sword, and all the rest of his equipments for riding. Goffredo spent all the evening in putting things in order and anxiously waited for the morning to set out. Camillus was greatly pained at this and had recourse to his usual remedy of prayer; and the grace that he obtained was certainly wonderful. Goffredo had gone to bed in perfect health, but he was seized there with such a fever, trembling, and chattering of the teeth, that all the house was alarmed. Camillus went to see him among the rest, and finding him in this state, asked him if he still persevered in his resolution to go away. Then the sick man entered into himself and answered: "No, Father, I vow to God to remain and to die in this congregation." And in order to show his sincerity, he gave the Saint his letters of reception into Monte Cassino, that he might tear them to pieces. Then Camillus heartily thanked God and assured the sick man that he would soon be well, as, in fact,

happened; in a few days he got up quite well and persevered in the congregation till his death.

Of all vocal prayer the Divine Office was that which he esteemed most highly, and he was remarkably attentive while he was reciting it. He always liked some one to say it with him, partly to have some one to answer alternately with him in that sacrifice of praise, as the Church on earth does in her choirs, and as the angels do in heaven; and partly because he was scrupulously afraid of leaving out a single word and so not reciting it perfectly. Before he began, he tried to banish every other thought, as he wished to devote that time entirely to our Lord, whom he imagined present before him nailed to the cross — indeed he always held a crucifix before him. He recited it with head uncovered, on his knees, very seldom by memory, but always with his eyes on the breviary and observing all the ceremonies indicated by the rubrics.

There were some who did not relish this minuteness, who used to hide themselves, so as not to be obliged to say it with him, and who excused their want of devotion by saying that they could not bear to see him so troubled with scruples; and indeed his scruples on this subject were numerous (I record it for the comfort of other servants of God who may be troubled in a like way). He would have his companion pronounce the words clearly and distinctly, otherwise he made him repeat them, and he himself often repeated the verses which he thought he had not said with the attention which he considered necessary while conversing with God. Then his companion was often obliged to say to him: "Be quiet, Father, and trust all this to my conscience. You have said it well and omitted nothing, and all the markers in the breviary are

in their proper places." These scruples did not leave him even in time of sickness, and however bad his fever might be, there never was a day when he did not ask the doctor whether or not he were obliged to say Office; and although he received in answer a most decided no, yet he still persisted, till the doctor was obliged to mortify him and order him under obedience to be quiet and do as he was bid.

In the latter years of his life, the Lord delivered him from this trouble, and not only in saying Office, but in every other thing he had to do, he became free, unembarrassed, and confident. He no longer wanted a companion to say Office with, but he said it by himself, he said it quickly, he said it in his carriage while traveling, or he and his companions would say it in choir. Indeed he became so free that he corrected the scrupulous when they repeated or were tormented with doubts on this subject. And he sometimes went to their rooms to give them suitable advice to free them from their scruples.

But he was much more energetic in rebuking those who talked or laughed or allowed themselves to be distracted while they were saying Office.

Although St. Camillus had obtained the grace of being delivered from these harrowing doubts, yet he never relaxed in diligence and attention, especially while he recited matins. For this he would retire to a solitary place and would not listen to any one or be disturbed on any account. One day he was saying matins in the hospital of Milan, when some religious presented to him a woman who was supposed to be a saint and who was very desirous of speaking to him and obtaining his blessing. He put his finger on the verse he was saying and made a motion with his other hand that she should be sent away; he would not even see her.

I have mentioned elsewhere the devotion and fervor with which he said Mass. I will here add a few examples in proof of it. He never omitted saying Mass, unless prevented by severe illness or by the duty of assisting the dying; he always said Mass while traveling; and as it was sometimes difficult to find vestments and other necessities, he carried everything with him. He was very particular in all the ceremonies and in saying every word of the secret parts.

He never went to the altar without first confessing; and once in Leghorn (Livorno), as he had to separate the next day from his companion, who was going to Genoa, while his destination was Florence, fearing that he should not conveniently find a confessor, he stopped in the middle of the street, crossed himself, and so made his confession to his companion before they separated.

So great was his care not to offer the Holy Sacrifice with his conscience defiled with even the slightest defect, that once when he was saying Mass in the hospital of St. Spirito, in the presence of all the servants of the establishment, just before the consecration he remembered having rebuked a little too harshly a novice who was serving his Mass. He would not proceed without first turning and begging pardon, at the same time advising him not to communicate that day, for fear he might be a little ill-tempered.

Another time in Bocchianico he was just beginning Mass, when he was told that a good many could not wait for him and had gone out of the church; he, fearing that this had happened through his fault, sent persons through the place to go from house to house to bring them back to hear it. He all the while remained vested at the altar till they had arrived. He used often to repeat, that he knew no other way of giving peace to his soul, than

by keeping a clean conscience by always going to confession before saying Mass. He genuflected to the ground, though his leg gave him great pain; while celebrating he shed many tears; he wished that all the furniture of the altar should be clean and neat; he examined scrupulously whether anything necessary was wanting, and even felt to ascertain whether the altar stone was in its place, to make sure of putting the chalice down upon it.

He was asked what he would do if a fly or other disgusting thing was to fly into the chalice after consecration: "I would swallow it," he answered; "I have often done so, taking the mortification for the love of God."

He would allow no chatting in church during Mass: once in Bocchianico he heard some women talking while he was celebrating, so he turned round and gave them a severe rebuke from the altar, at the same time mortifying them and teaching them to behave better in future.

However scrupulous Camillus was on this subject, yet the advice of his confessor would quiet him in a moment — this he would write down and keep by him — this was his common practice when he took counsel with other religious or had to do anything in discharge of his conscience; abundant evidence of this was given by many scraps of paper found in his room after his death, whereon many things of this kind were written with his own hand.

Thus did the Saint try to walk in full light and without any embarrassment in the ways of the Lord. He was so enamored of purity of heart that he was melted with joy only in hearing it mentioned, and used to say he could not comprehend why all men were not ready to endure any martyrdom in order to obtain such a treasure, "which would make them like the angels, imitators of their love and of their perfect service of their Creator."

To his prayers he united the intercession of the saints, and chiefly of the most holy Virgin, towards whom he had a most tender filial devotion and whom he chose as principal protector of his congregation. He never went to bed without saying the rosary, and he used to say: "Woe to us sinners, if we had not in heaven this great advocate, the treasurer of all the graces that come from the hand of God." He wished every one to have a rosary, and once in Genoa he was distributing a quantity of them which he had brought from Loreto to the lay brothers, when a priest came up to him to ask for one: "Have you not one?" said Camillus. "No," said the priest. "What! a priest without a rosary, a priest without a rosary!" said Camillus in astonishment.

At the commencement of the congregation, he obliged all his religious to sing every day the Little Office of the Madonna; he never omitted this exercise, at which he always assisted with the greatest spiritual consolation. Whenever he passed by a Church, or a holy image, he uncovered his head, even though it was raining in torrents. He felt the greatest joy on festivals of the Blessed Virgin or of the saints, and it seemed as if on those days he felt no pain and was wearied by no labor, such was his spiritual consolation and joy.

When St. Charles Borromeo was canonized, he went to the solemnity through devotion to the saint who had so charitably undertaken the task of serving the plague-stricken. When his Life was read in the refectory, he burst out, as though moved with a holy envy: "Oh, if our congregation had been founded then! This glorious saint would not have had such trouble to find ministers for the souls or the bodies of his sick; our work will never be well known except in similar times."

When the body of St. Caecilia was found in Rome, Cardinal Sfondrato asked him to come and see it: in venerating the relics of that unconquerable virgin, he was so rapt that he could not tear himself away, crying out: "O happy should I be if God gave me grace also to see Him glorious and immortal in heaven!"

He visited the holy house of Loreto several times, and the sanctuary of Assisi, out of devotion to the glorious St. Francis. He never went through Sienna without visiting the house of St. Catherine, and, indeed, this was his constant practice wherever there were celebrated sanctuaries or remarkable relics of saints; here he would either say Mass or at least remain a long while in prayer.

He had a singular affection for his guardian angel, and from the warmth with which he recommended us to be devout to this keeper of our souls, we may suppose that he experienced great graces from this devotion. He visited all the stations and used to go and listen to the music in the churches, like St. Augustine, who after his conversion found great pleasure in hearing the sacred melodies. But no temporal or spiritual gratification could ever keep him from his duties to the sick.

One day, as he was returning from solemn vespers in one of the principal churches in Rome, his companion spoke of the great delight the music had given him. St. Camillus answered that another kind of music would have pleased him better. "What kind?" said his companion. "Why, the music which the sick make in the hospitals, when all at the same time are asking for water to rinse their mouths, or to have their beds made, or to have their feet warmed. Oh, what sweet music is this! it is exactly the music that ought above all others to please the Servants of the Sick."

In the year of jubilee, 1600, he began on the second day of the year to make the thirty visits to the four basilicas of St. Peter, St. Paul, St. John, and St. Maria Maggiore. He went regularly four times a week, in spite of the bad roads, which were broken up by the bad weather. It was wonderful to see a man with a leg so diseased, walking such a distance, always fasting. And especially as after it was all over, including often a visit to the Santa Scala, he would go and take the night-watch at the hospital of St. John or of St. Spirito. He walked with a stick, because of his bad leg, with his eyes on the ground, and so recollected that he looked like a novice; he never broke silence, except to say the rosary, or to speak on spiritual subjects.

Here we have another proof how pleased God was with the prayers of Camillus, for in recompense for his extraordinary devotion he revealed to him that before the end of the Anno Santo, He would grant him a special grace. The Saint felt so certain of this revelation that he often told it to his companions. He said that God had shown him especial favors in other holy years; in one he was born, in another he was converted, so he felt quite sure that this time he should obtain that which he most desired, namely, the peace of his order, which was at that time disturbed by various opinions. As he predicted, so did it come to pass, for three days before the end of the year the bull of Clement VIII came out, which put the whole controversy to rest and put an end to the difficulties which harassed him. The visits, which he began on the 2d of January, he finished on Easter Day, the 2d of April; on the Holy Saturday previous he made a general confession of his whole life, with tears of the most tender compunction.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Courteousness of St. Camillus to All Religious and Benefactors — All Men Esteem Him as a Saint — His Zeal in Defending the Reputation of His Neighbor and His Hatred for Detractors, Swearers, and Liars

Camillus loved and revered the religious of all orders, considering all of them to be laborers in the Lord's vineyard. But he had a particular affection for the Capuchin Fathers, both because of the kindness he had received from them in Manfredonia, and because they had been mainly instrumental in his conversion. While any of his old acquaintances remained alive, he often went to visit them and invited them to our houses. When he made his solemn profession, he invited four of them to be present, and among them F. Joseph of Malta, with whom he had lived some time in the convent of Manfredonia. After dinner he begged him to relate to the guests the way in which God converted him, and besought him not to gloss over the many imperfections which he had while he was in the convent. But as the good religious was very discreet and modest in his account, Camillus, who had asked for the recital as a humiliation, was by no means satisfied, and began himself to give an account of his whole life, such as very nearly amounted to a public general confession.

He also showed a great affection for the Dominicans; when some of their novices came to our novitiate, in Naples, he received them as so many angels; he made them take their recreation with our novices, and served them with his own hands at a collation of fruit. After-

wards, at the request of their master, he gave them a learned instruction, taking as his subject, "My Sons, the Habit Does Not Make the Monk," and exhorting them to perseverance and purity of heart. Afterwards they all kissed his hand and went away filled with consolation.

He professed a particular obligation to the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, and never forgot the charity with which, in the commencement of their work, he and his companions were assisted and directed by F. Ottaviano Capelli. Our congregation is still intimately united in the bonds of friendship to that great society.

But the chief place in the heart of St. Camillus was reserved for his old spiritual Father, St. Philip Neri, to whom he was so much beholden for the assistance and the advice he had given him. He had such an esteem and devotion to him, and after his holy death to the whole congregation of the Oratory, that he received every word of theirs as a command and refused nothing which they asked of him. When they went to the hospital together, he always gave them the precedence; he often asked them to give sermons and exhortations to his young novices or students, and he himself often went to the Chiesa Nuova to hear the sermons and other exercises established by St. Philip. Indeed, he gloried in being called the child of that great apostle of Rome.

He often gave objects of devotion to the benefactors of his order and sometimes invited them to dine in our refectory, where he endeavored to treat them with a modest and religious liberality. This acknowledgment of his gratitude was so well received that many illustrious persons (among others, Cardinal Sordin de la Chappelle) accepted his hospitality. He was also frequently invited to dine with various prelates and cardinals, and among

the rest with Cardinals Baronius and Tarugi, who loved him much and took great pleasure in his holy simplicity.

Moreover, such was the estimation in which the sanctity of the servant of God was held that Cardinal Mondovi, whenever he came to the house, used to embrace him and kiss him on the forehead or on the tonsure, and wished to have him to assist at his death, and left him all his property.

Cardinal Bellarmine, when he heard of his death, said, "I am certain that he is not only gone straight to Paradise, but that he is raised to the rank of the Seraphim for his ardent charity."

Vincent IV, Duke of Mantua, said to Msgr. Gonzaga, the bishop of that city, that when he was speaking with Camillus, he could not help thinking him another St. Paul, such was his spirit and fervor. His words, indeed, were few, but of great weight; he had such a devotion to him that he would have kissed his feet, and if he had but one loaf in the world, he would give half of it to maintain F. Camillus and his congregation. His deeds proved that these words came from his heart, for he was always most generous and liberal to our order. He inspired his son and successor, Ferdinand, with the same sentiments towards us.

When the Count di Fuentes, governor of Milan, was told that the founder of the Servants of the Sick had been a soldier, that he was still alive, and then at Milan, he sent to say that he would come and visit him the next morning. Camillus did not like to give so great a person the trouble of coming to our house, so he went first to his court. He was received with every demonstration of respect, and had a long audience. The count kept his head uncovered while he spoke to him and expressed great pleasure at having seen and known him.

In the course of this history we have seen what opinion the different Popes had of him. Sixtus V, who approved his congregation; Gregory, who erected it into an order; Clement VIII, who often assisted it; and, lastly, Paul V, who sent his secretary to give him the apostolical benediction before his death.

It would be endless to narrate all the testimonials of respect which he received; and as he esteemed them not, we also will content ourselves with a few facts which will show the estimation he was held in during his life. When he was walking through the town or to the hospitals, many persons secretly kissed his garments, others forcibly took hold of his hands and kissed them, others threw themselves down before him and asked his blessing. These things were the greatest mortification to Camillus, whose humility could not bear that any one should make any account of him. But his greatest trouble arose when any prelate or cardinal met him and asked him to pray for him; then he bowed his head in confusion and answered, "God make me worthy of being heard."

Once Cardinal Monte met him and stopped his carriage to let Camillus pass first. Camillus refused, and this contest of humility lasted some time. Indeed, the more he fled from honors, the more he was honored.

When his hair was being cut, his companion collected some, put it in paper, and hid it in a corner of the room, to satisfy the devotion of many who wished for some relic of Camillus. Camillus saw what was being done, and he rebuked him sharply and commanded him to throw the hair out of the window immediately.

Another lay brother, while he was bandaging Camillus's leg, took the opportunity, while the Saint was distracted, of kissing the sore, leaving the Saint full of wonder and confusion.

But even brute animals gave signs of respect for him. Once when he was in Chieti and wanted to go to Bocchianico, he borrowed a horse of a gentleman who, on lending it, told him that it was an ill-tempered beast and might hurt his leg by its prancing; Camillus took the horse, saying that God would not let him be hurt by it; and so it was, for all the time the Saint rode it, the horse was as gentle as a lamb.

On the other hand, those who opposed the Saint were punished by God, as may be seen by the two following facts, the first of which happened during his life, the second after his death. When the Saint undertook the care of the hospital at Naples, five of the officers through malice conspired to drive him away by complaints and calumnies; before a year had passed, they all five were dead, to the great astonishment of Camillus, who did not see how otherwise he could have escaped their persecutions.

After his death something was talked over in Rome which was greatly to the credit of the Saint and of his congregation; but a certain great personage did all he could to oppose it, and never omitted an opportunity of speaking ill of him, and could not endure that any one should venerate his memory or be devout to him. God permitted that in a few days this person should be seized with an acute pain in the side, which soon killed him, making him cry out like a madman. God's providence disposed that in his last moments he should be assisted by the children of Camillus; and that after death, as his body was to be taken privately to the church, his servants should send to the Maddalena to borrow the litter that was used for the sick; so that this man, who in his life had been the greatest enemy of Camillus and his order, after his death had to be carried to the church in the

same litter which Camillus had procured solely to carry the sick to the hospital.

Perhaps by this God intended to show His approval of the virtue of Camillus, who had ever been so zealous for the honor of his neighbor that He always defended him most energetically whenever he saw him attacked. On this subject he could not endure the slightest defect. He reproved his inferiors with gravity and excused the intention when his equals were talking together; if the detractors were persons of station, he was silent and turned away, so that they could easily see that he was not pleased with such conversation.

Hearing a religious say that some fowls had been stolen from a vineyard belonging to the congregation, though he did not name any one, yet Camillus reproved him, saying, "How, rob, rob? the poor man must have been in distress; he took them through necessity; he did not steal them."

Once he found a thief in the act of stealing some things from the rooms of D. Francesco Bosio, prior of the hospital of St. Spirito. The miserable man, when he saw that he was discovered, threw himself on his knees and begged to be forgiven. Camillus showed him through the window three thieves who were still hanging on the gibbet, and he threatened him with the same end unless he amended; he made him give up all he had taken and promise never to do so again; and then he took great pains to get him off without being seen. The fellow had before stolen some things from Camillus's room, which was next to the prior's; but the Saint had not the courage to reproach the man with these thefts, but only said to him, "I have missed many things too from my room, but I do not say that it was you, God forbid; and even if it was you, I give you my blessing." The prior com-

plained that he had not kept the man, and he wanted to know who it was; Camillus, who had purposely abstained from looking at him, answered, "Ah, Sir Prior, I wonder that you should want Camillus to be a thief-taker, seeing what a tender thing our neighbor's fame is; it ought to be enough for you that he promised me never to come here again." Nor could anything more be got out of him. Moreover, he persuaded the prior to forgive the same thief for thefts he had committed at various times, to the amount of about ninety scudi.

While Camillus was manager of the hospital in the Via delle Carozze, another thief stole many of the poor men's bundles, and as he went on in his evil ways, he at last fell into the hands of the officers, who found the stolen property upon him and took him to prison. Camillus supposed that the poor fellow had been driven by want, so he begged and even bribed the constables to release him; leaving every one astonished at such charity.

He was severe with idle and curious people and with those who spent their time in walking about the town; and his rebuke was strengthened by his example, for he was seen to be always occupied in the service of God. After his resignation of the generalship, when asked how he passed his time, he answered, "Days seem to me but moments; I divide them between prayer, Office, Mass, the poor, and spiritual reading," which last he used to call the true food of the soul. Once when he was talking with a gentleman in Genoa, as long as serious questions were put, he answered everything with great wisdom; but when the conversation was turned upon useless subjects, he shut his eyes and either was, or pretended to be, asleep.

He abhorred liars, and had once sent off a novice for a slight untruth, and it was only because many inter-

ceded for him and pleaded his ignorance and simplicity, that he at last allowed him to remain.

It was a great torment to him to examine himself for confession; for although he considered himself the greatest sinner in the world, still he found nothing to accuse himself of. Once when he mentioned this difficulty to one of our Fathers, he suggested to him that he might accuse himself of his distractions and negligences in saying Office; but Camillus replied that he could not do so for fear of telling a lie, for he was quite sure that he had not knowingly committed a fault in any of his actions. In some manuscripts of his it was found that he had noted, as matter for confession, all the idle words which he had spoken while in the world, the time he had lost in gambling, and the gambling itself; from this we may gather that even then he had preserved his purity unspotted.

He had also a particular horror for swearers and cursers, and he always rebuked them, even in the public streets. Once as he was walking in Rome, he thought he heard an imprecation; he asked his companion whether he had heard it, and as he said that it was one, Camillus turned and cried out, "O my brother, curse not, or you will have the wrath of God upon you."

Another time he met a carriage full of gentlemen, one of whom began to curse; Camillus put his hand into the carriage to stop his mouth, saying, "Stop, brother, do not curse," leaving those gentlemen frightened and confused.

Once as he was crossing the Piazza de' Banchi, in Genoa, he heard a man blaspheming the holy name of God, and was so horrified that he was seized with a sudden fever with cold and trembling, like Mattathias, of whom the Scripture says that, when he saw a Hebrew

sacrificing to idols, he was grieved and his veins trembled, then he held up his hands to heaven, and cried out: "O my brother, what has the great God done to you that you should curse Him?"

A similar case happened in a certain hospital on occasion of a great disorder and sin against God, at which Camillus was so much pained that he fell into a fever and kept his bed several days, with a severe cough and spitting of blood. Thus did he always act when the sin was open and certain, but in doubtful cases he always interpreted for the best and excused his neighbor's actions.

Once a layman gave him a letter to read, written by a director to a lady, which he wanted to persuade him was written with an evil purpose. Camillus read it several times over, and finding it to be on indifferent subjects, would not pronounce it to be bad; but then seeing the words "Pax Christi," Peace of Christ, written at the top, he turned to the person who had given it to him and said to him with an air of astonishment, "My poor man, do you not see here the Pax Christi? Then how can the letter be written with a bad intention?" So saying, he left the man, who was perhaps too fond of caviling and imputing bad motives.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Implacable Hatred of the Devils Against St. Camillus

In the two former books we have described the works of charity of our holy Father and his immense labors in founding his order, the heroic virtues, both theological and cardinal, that he practiced, and the opinion that was generally entertained of his sanctity. We come now to the gifts and wonderful favors which God bestowed upon him, in attestation of his virtue and his merit.

The more a man by his virtue and sanctity makes himself beloved by God, the more he becomes an object of hatred to the devils; the implacable hatred of hell against Camillus will furnish us with a strong argument to prove how beloved and favored our Saint was by God. Indeed, when the devil saw the great good that Camillus did and the innumerable souls which he and his congregation snatched from his claws and bore off to heaven, he never ceased persecuting him in every possible way, not only during his life, but even after his holy death.

One night in Rome, when every one thought that our Saint was asleep, he was heard struggling and calling out for F. Francesco Profeta to make haste and bring with him the book for the recommendation of a soul. The Father went and asked him why he cried out so and was so afraid, when he had at other times always displayed an invincible courage; but Camillus gave no other answer than desiring him to read the usual protest for a man on the point of death; after they were read, he was as calm and tranquil as usual. Every one thought, and it was reported both in the house and outside, that the devil had attempted to strangle him.

In the little hospital at Genoa a possessed woman, named Margaret, was lying sick; whenever Camillus went in, the devils showed their fury against him by threats and insults, and by the mouth of the poor woman they called, "Camel, longshanks, legs." Just before he came in, they used to say, "Here comes old rotten leg." And at the same time they tormented the poor woman more cruelly. Three days after Camillus had set out from Genoa to Rome, the possessed woman began to laugh and enjoy herself so much that the servants of the hospital

and one of our Fathers ran to her in wonder, and our Father questioned her: "What's the matter, what's the matter?" The woman, or rather the devil, answered: "I laugh and am glad, because your Father, longshanks, legs, has just fallen into a ditch and has narrowly escaped breaking his neck, but he will do it next time." After about a week letters came from Camillus to Genoa, in which he ordered all the Fathers and brothers of that house to return thanks to God for having preserved him in a perilous fall in a ditch. They reckoned up the time and found that the Saint had this narrow escape at the very time when the possessed woman broke out into that fiendish merriment.

There was a young man eighteen years of age at Milan who was possessed; while the priest was making the usual exorcism, the devil assailed him with every possible insult. After the departure of the priest the young man became quiet again and began talking to one of our lay brothers, who had gone to that house in his rounds to ask for alms. In the course of conversation Camillus's name was mentioned; and immediately the devil returned, the young man's hair stood on end, his eyes flashed fire, he roared like a lion, and cried out twice, "Don't name him to me, don't name him, for I cannot bear it." After many dreadful struggles the young man became tranquil again, and when the bystanders asked him what had so disturbed him, he answered that directly he heard the name of Camillus, he felt as if he was being suffocated, and his heart was wrung by the pain which the devils suffered at hearing it. All the bystanders were the more astonished at this, as the young man had never before seen or heard of Camillus.

The cause of the devil's hatred of Camillus was, that the Saint was continually overcoming him and bearing

off the trophies of victory, and because of the power that God had given him over hell. Camillus used to call the devil "the great beast," and knew even at a distance when the evil spirit had possession of a soul.

In Bocchianico he was asked to reconcile a quarrel between one Fajella of Chieti and one Luzio Mezzadonna. His charity made him undertake this labor cheerfully. He went immediately to Chieti, and as he was knocking at Fajella's door, "Here," said he, "is the great beast." Then he began to exhort and beseech him to grant to Luzio the forgiveness which he desired, but found him so obstinate that he could not persuade him; so he took the crucifix out of his bosom, knelt down at his feet and prayed, and entreated him to pardon him, by that Lord who had died on the cross to obtain pardon for our sins; but all was in vain; at last Camillus was scandalized at this truly diabolical malice and said, "Well, then, as you will not do it for the love of Christ, who commands you to do so, I will find out another way to make you." Then he returned to Naples and used his influences with the judges, so as to make them cancel the sentence of three years' service in the galleys which they had recorded against Luzio, and thus the devil, who had possessed the heart of Fajella and made him so malicious and revengeful, was cheated and overcome.

Camillus was more fortunate in the following case: he had an acquaintance in Rome who was continually tormented day and night by a familiar spirit; by day he struck, threw him down, pulled his clothes, and sometimes deprived him of his speech, so that he could not even utter the holy name of Jesus; and by night he haunted him with wicked and filthy imaginations. The good man knew not what to do, as his whole life was passed in misery and fear. He consulted a physician, who,

knowing that his art could not reach this case, advised him to go to Father Camillus and beg the assistance of his prayers. The poor man obeyed and presented himself to the servant of God; he related at length all his troubles and warmly recommended himself to his charity and his powerful intercession. The Saint listened to him with great kindness and then said to him: "This beast of a devil wanted to make game of you." Then putting his hand on his head, he added: "Fear no more." And this touch of Camillus had such an effect that from that moment the unclean spirit never dared to trouble him again, and the man was restored to perfect tranquillity.

The hatred of the devils did not cease with the life of Camillus; many possessed persons were brought to his tomb, especially during the few years immediately after his death, and they all broke out into exclamations or acts which clearly showed the implacable spite which the devils had against him and against his religious. A woman, named Giacoma, was being exorcised at his tomb; she lifted up her eyes and saw a picture of the Saint hung up there as a votive offering; at that instant she began to roar and cried out: "That is the picture of a great enemy of mine, who has unjustly usurped the seraphim's throne that belongs to me." Then she looked at some of our religious who were present, redoubled her fury, and cried out: "Take me away, I can't bear the sight of them, they are enemies of mine, who rob me of souls when they go to assist the sick." Then sighing deeply, she proceeded sorrowfully: "We busy ourselves all his life long to tempt a man, and then at last these fellows come and with their holy exhortations make us lose what we had gained. How unlucky we are, having to fight against the angels and against these fellows!" The devil said all this to his own confusion, for although

he is the father of lies, yet when God compels him, he is obliged to confess the truth.

And not only his pictures, but everything else that belonged to St. Camillus, was equally abhorred and hated by the evil spirits. What can be more insignificant than a little leaf? And yet many witnesses testified that a myrtle leaf which had touched the body of St. Camillus when he was laid out for burial was sufficient to arouse the devil's fury. A possessed woman used to sell cloth on the steps of St. Giacomo de' Spagnoli, in the Piazza Navona; a man went and bought some, and to pay her, took a tester out of a purse where there was a little branch of this myrtle; the woman took it and threw it down as if it was a red hot coal and ran away crying, "I burn! I burn!" The purchaser did not know that the woman was possessed, nor the wonderful virtue of those leaves, which had touched the Saint's body, and which made even the coins that touched them painful to the devils; and his astonishment would have never ended, had not the possessed woman said to him: "Throw away that thing which you have in your purse, for it has touched the body of that old brute who died at the Maddalena." A great crowd of people were present, who heard and saw all this, and all of them gave glory to God who had given such virtue to the body of His servant, that, like Jesus Christ, the mere touch of things which had been about him was so wonderfully tormenting to the devils.

In the processes there are numerous instances, testified by two, three, or more witnesses, of possessed persons forcibly brought to the bier on which the body of St. Camillus was exposed, howling, and calling him "Old brute," "Horrid priest," and saying that they were tormented and burnt by him. Some of these, moreover, were suddenly cured by the touch of that sacred body.

The Rev. Dr. Andrea Canale attests of one woman, that she was standing near him among the crowd of people that had come to venerate the body of the Saint and was howling as if in despair, and when another priest commanded her in the name of God, and by the merits of the blessed Father, to depart thence, the woman fell down as if fainting. "I then" (these are the words of the Rev. Dr. as given in the processes) "took one of her arms and put it upon an arm of F. Camillus, and she immediately got up; and when she was asked: 'What is the matter?' she answered: 'There is nothing the matter;' and I recollect that I saw her cured as if there had been nothing the matter with her, though she had just been howling as possessed persons do; and I firmly believe that God cured her by the intercession of F. Camillus."

Of another woman two eye-witnesses attest, that they among others went to visit the body of St. Camillus and saw in the crowd a possessed woman who made a great noise. "Then I," says the Rev. Dr. Bartolomeo Cittadini, one of the witnesses, "commanded her in God's name to go and kiss the feet of Camillus; she with a haughty voice said she would not, she was afraid. I again ordered her in God's name to go. She got up, and I, with great difficulty, led her there; as soon as we were come to the bier, I commanded her to kiss the feet of Camillus. She made great resistance, but at last kissed them; the first time she trembled all over; the second time, as soon as she had kissed them, she fell to the ground, and after remaining so some time, she got up and said: 'I am cured,' and thanked the good God and Father Camillus and prostrated herself in prayer, and then went out of the church quiet and tranquil."

CHAPTER TWENTY

Camillus, Illuminated by God, Knows the Thoughts and the Consciences of Others

Another gift that Camillus had received from Heaven was a supernatural light, by which he knew the secrets of the conscience and the most hidden thoughts of others. Many, and among others the writer of this Life, observed that in his discourses he used to speak in such a way that those who listened to him believed that he knew all about them, and they immediately had recourse to the sacrament of penance. And his religious had so fixed an idea that he saw the interior of the soul, that they dared not appear in his presence with a stain or shadow of sin.

Nor was it only his bodily presence that thus reproved the imperfect; even his pictures were found to have the same power. A portrait of him was hung up in a room of our house in Genoa, which was assigned to a religious who was rather tepid. This man could never look at the picture without fancying that it reproached him with his loss of time, his idle thoughts, and his irregular actions; so to put an end to these silent reproofs and to be able to live in his own way, he turned the picture with its face to the wall to rid himself of the annoyance. We read also of others who were just about to commit sin or were entertaining thoughts of anger, hatred, or revenge, at the mere looking upon a portrait of the Saint, being checked, as it were, by a voice from it and desisting from their evil intention.

In the year 1605 our Saint set out from Bocchianico to Naples with some religious and two secular persons,

one of whom was a Bolognese and the other a Frenchman, named Antoine Santese, who was destined to serve Camillus; on the 18th of June, when they came near Venafro, Santese, heated and weary, was nearly two miles behind them. So he grew impatient and began to murmur within himself at Camillus, saying that he was not the Saint he had supposed him to be, but rather a devil without any discretion, for making him start without any breakfast and causing him to suffer so much. With these thoughts he at last arrived exhausted and feeble at the inn of Tiano, and finding his companion at table eating most heartily, he grumbled at him for not waiting for him; but all the answer he got was this: a crust of bread and a glass of water were shown to him, and he was told that by order of F. Camillus this was to be his dinner. In a furious passion he began to storm and shout, and at the noise Camillus came out from the next room and said to him: "Remember your murmuring by the road against the priests of God; so now do penance for it." The young man was half dead at these words, and as he declared in the process, his hair stood on end for shame that the Saint had perceived his thoughts; he refused to eat anything and could not quiet himself, but kept repeating: "How could this Father have known what I have been thinking of today, so as to be able to pay me out precisely for the wrong I have done him?" From that time forth he always venerated him with the greatest devotion and respect.

At the funeral of Margaret, Queen of Philip III, of Spain, there was a solemn procession at Naples. Camillus had gone out on business, and being overtaken by a heavy shower, was obliged to take shelter under the portico of a palace, where Oberto Cantone and three friends were likewise driven by the rain. This man had had a

son in the order, so he was acquainted with Camillus, and the two entered into conversation. In the meantime one of the other three, named Pietro Paulo Pinacchi, stood apart, saying to himself, "Everybody tells me great things of the sanctity of this man; but I don't see how sanctity and curiosity to see a procession agree together." But Camillus broke the thread of his conversation with Oberto, and looking him in the face, said with a loud voice, so as to be heard by all: "Gentlemen, do not wonder at my being here; I did not come to see the procession, but to avoid the rain," and then he took up the conversation again till the rain ceased, and then went away. Then Pinacchi said to his companions, "Now I know that this Father is a saint; for when I was thinking ill of him for coming to see the procession, he saw my thought and answered it."

One Stephen, a carpenter, was at work in our house at Rome, when some young men came to see him and to talk with him. Camillus interrupted him, drew him aside, and said to him: "Oh, poor fellow, where do you want to go; let these things be, or God will punish you; send these bad young men away." Then Stephen confessed that they were planning to go and commit sin, and concluded that as Camillus could not have overheard them, God must have enlightened him to know their secret thoughts.

While our Saint was in Naples, a vagabond, who lived by his wits, came to him with a long story about his misfortunes, how he had been a cavalier, and how miserably poor he was then, hoping to get a good round sum as an alms. Camillus, illuminated by God, answered: "Mind, it is not good to pretend to be what one is not:" then he offered him a trifling alms and said: "I give you this for the love of God; but when you want

anything, ask it simply." The sham poor man was thunderstruck and saw the superiority of the spirit of Camillus, and ever after he venerated him as a great servant of God.

While he was living in Bocchianico, on some feast day a lay brother came into his room, who, for some impediment, had neglected to go to confession and Communion that morning. Camillus immediately began to reprove him for his omission, and the brother excused himself as best he could. But he felt quite ashamed that Camillus was aware of an omission that no one knew, and from that time forward he was most careful to observe this and all the other rules of our institute.

Just before the death of Girolamo Uccelli, one of our priests, he made a deposition upon oath, that once when his eyes were bad in Milan, he went to Camillus and begged him to make the sign of the cross over his eyes, but without any belief that he should be cured: Camillus knew his thoughts, and as he was making the sign of the cross, he repeated twice, "Little faith, little faith." Then the Father was very much ashamed and regretted it during his whole life, and he often told our Fathers that his want of faith in the servant of God was the reason why he was not cured.

A woman of the world in Rome resolved to turn to God and desired to make a general confession; but she was much embarrassed with the difficulties and doubts with which her mind was obscured; she was advised to have recourse to F. Camillus; she went to him in the hospital of St. Spirito and began by telling him the aversion she felt against confession, as she did not know where to begin and as the difficulty of remembering everything seemed insurmountable. Camillus heard her with great kindness and told her to return the following day, when he

would teach her how to make a good confession. The woman returned, and Camillus took from his bosom a paper where all her sins were registered so distinctly and clearly that it was impossible to doubt that he had learned them by revelation. The woman read them with astonishment and bitter regret, after which he sent her to one of his religious to be helped to complete her confession. The penitent was so well satisfied and so ravished with the spirit of Camillus that she never afterwards left him; she began to lead a very holy life, to frequent the sacraments, and to perform other pious works; after the example of her master she went almost every day to the hospital and served the sick women with maternal affection, often supplying them with refreshments.

When this woman related the means of her conversion, another miracle of Camillus came to light; for she said that one day she went finely dressed into the church of St. Giovanni, when she met two religious, one of whom, immediately he saw her, made the sign of the cross on his forehead and fled away at a good pace; on which her heart was touched with grace, and she cried out with bitter grief, "Ah me, this Father has seen my evil conscience, devil that I am!" She corresponded to this wonderful grace, turned her back upon the world, and detested her former bad life. Then when she was directed to F. Camillus to make a general confession, directly she saw him, she recognized him as the very person who had thus fled from her; she had no doubt of his identity, for she had noticed his height, his dark complexion, and the lameness in one leg. The woman persevered in holy works, always giving herself up to reclaiming other women from sin; and she was called the penitent of F. Camillus, because of her going so frequently to confession to him.

There was staying at Rome one Pietro Anagni, who was thinking of becoming a religious in our order; he had never told his vocation to any one, not even to his own confessor, when he received a letter from Naples from F. Camillus, in which were these words: "Brother, stand firm in your purpose of becoming a religious in our congregation, and if the devil suggests to you any sinister thought, pay no attention to him." Camillus wrote at the same time to the Fathers of the Maddalena, telling them to receive the said Pietro into the order. Wondering at this, and clearly perceiving that the Saint had, by revelation, penetrated his thoughts, he became a religious and persevered till death as a lay brother of the Servants of the Sick.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

His Gift of Prophecy

God was not content with revealing to His servant the hidden things and the deepest secrets of the human heart; but He was, moreover, pleased to favor him with the gift of prophecy and the knowledge of future events. The Cavalier Francesco Grimaldi of Genoa had lived many years with his wife without having any children; so he recommended himself to the prayers of St. Camillus who was then in Genoa. The Saint comforted him by assuring him that he need not doubt, for God would grant him his desire. In a year's time a son was born to him.

In 1592 the inheritance of Cardinal Mondovi occasioned a troublesome lawsuit to our order, which Pope Clement VIII referred to the Sacred Rota, and Camillus left the conduct of it to others, while he attended to the

poor in the hospitals. One morning as he was standing with some of his religious, they heard the bell ring more violently than usual: "Be glad, my brethren," he said, "this brings us news that we have gained the suit;" and so it was, to the great joy and thankfulness of them all.

In 1598, when the great flood occurred which I mentioned in the Third Book, Camillus, before the inundation, warned the prior to transport the sick immediately if he did not wish them to incur danger. The prior, who had a very high opinion of the servant of God, lost no time and caused all the sick to be taken to the little hospital, which stands at least four palms higher than the great hospital; but Camillus said that that was not enough, for the river would come up higher; the prior attended to his advice and removed them to the same floor where the canons' rooms are; scarcely were they arranged, when the Tiber began to rise, and in a quarter of an hour the hospital was flooded to the depth of twelve palms.

In 1602, when the Saint was about leaving Genoa, he went to the hospital there to take leave of his religious and of the women employed there in the service of the sick. As soon as he had entered, he asked for F. Stefano Testa, their confessor, and being told that he was saying Mass, he waited till he had finished. Afterwards he put his hand on his left shoulder and said to him, "Now, F. Stefano, one must go to heaven, and it is well to prepare oneself." F. Stefano was then perfectly well; yet he obeyed St. Camillus's words and prepared himself most attentively. In eight, or at most, ten days, he was seized with cholic, which carried him off in a few hours, quite ready to pass from this mortal life to eternity.

At Bocchianico Camillus was invited to dinner by his cousin Onofrio de Lellis; at the end of dinner Camillus appeared sad and almost senseless, so as to frighten

Onofrio and his other guests, who feared that he was ill; when lo, there poured in, one after the other, persons to tell him that the whole town was alarmed at the report of the Hall of the old Princes Palace having fallen and buried beneath its ruins eight bricklayers who were repairing it as a house for the Fathers. Camillus aroused himself at hearing this, and without changing his countenance bowed his head for a few moments and then with a serene and cheerful countenance said: "Fear not, the Lord has helped us; the workmen are not dead, the devil will not succeed in hindering this good work." Everyone thought it impossible that this assertion should be found true, as the men were buried nearly a yard deep in bricks and rubbish; and Gio. Francesco Torricella, who attested this fact in the processes, had already provided the bier to take the corpses to the church. But all were astonished when they saw the masons dug out alive and well, and so joyful that while the dust and lime was being brushed off them, they did nothing but thank God and laugh, declaring that they had suffered no harm whatever. Only one of them, named Marco, who was on the vault when it fell, was slightly wounded by a stone; and herein we see another miracle, for this very fellow had that morning been grumbling at Camillus for bringing him away from Rome, to fare so hardly in the mountains.

God was pleased to work more miracles on this occasion for the glory of His servant. First, when they could not find two of the men, "Dig here," said Camillus, "and you will find them," pointing with his foot to the place; and there they were. And again, when they had to send ten miles to Pinarella for puzzolana earth to make cement for the cistern, the benefactors were quite frightened at the expense. Camillus bid them trust in God, for

He would help them. A few days after, the Saint was going with his cousin Onofrio, Niccolo Francesco, and a mason, named Bartolomeo Roncio, to see a brick-kiln, when Camillus observed in one of Onofrio's fields that the ants cast up some black sand; he told the mason to look at it, and he found it to be excellent puzzolana. "See," exclaimed Camillus, "God has provided for our needs." They used this puzzolana to make the cistern, and after it was finished, the quarry was exhausted, and no more has been found since, as none had ever been found before.

Before they began this building, our Fathers lived in the house of one Rocco Tullio; one day as Camillus was conversing about the best way to arrange and finish it, he suddenly got up and said, "Let us go from this room, for the vaulting is insecure." And although there was no sign of danger, yet they had hardly reached the next room before the crash of the falling vault was heard. When they went to look at the ruin, they found that it had fallen exactly on the spot where they had been sitting; so full of admiration at Camillus, they thanked God, who by this means had delivered them from this mortal peril.

On the 14th of June, 1606, Giovanni Livorino was preparing to travel from Bocchianico to Naples with some property belonging to Camillus; the weather was most beautiful, just fit for the journey. Before starting, he went to take leave of the Saint, who advised him not to set out that day, if he cared for his life. Livorino was frightened at this warning and stayed; before an hour there came such a dreadful storm that he must have perished if he had been on the road. He started the next day and found the road so broken up and the lands so flooded that he saw plainly that he and the mules must

have perished, had it not been for the timely warning of Camillus, whom he ever after venerated as a saint and a prophet.

In July, 1610, Giovanni Dardano went to see Camillus before leaving Naples for Bocchianico. He went early and knocked at the door; Camillus was yet in bed, but he called Brother Giovanni Antonio Roneone and told him to open the gate for Dardano, for fear the dogs might come after him. The brother wondered how Camillus could possibly know that it was Dardano, but his astonishment was at its height when he opened the door and found it really was he. He merely said to him, "F. Camillus knew who it was," and then took him to Camillus's room; the door was still shut, so Dardano had to wish him good morning from outside. Camillus, from within, cried out: "It is very fortunate that you have come. You will not mind waiting till I am dressed." So he waited about two hours and a half, and then from curiosity looked through the keyhole and saw Camillus kneeling before the crucifix with extraordinary fervor, moving his head and hands as if he were conversing with the Lord; he was so curious to see the end that he waited an hour longer, till the ecstasy of Camillus was finished. Then the Saint opened the door and said to him: "Good morning, I hope you are not annoyed at waiting so long. Have patience for the love of God." Then he began to ask him what he was going to do. Dardano told him that he was just starting for Bocchianico, and asked if he had any commands. Camillus told him to put off his journey that day, for he would have to pass through a great danger. He obeyed, and when he saw Camillus the next day, he was told that he must still pass through some danger, but God would help him, and he should reach Bocchianico safe and sound. On his way, near Capua, he

was nearly kicked in the face by the mule; near Palena he had to pass through a tempest of stones that were sliding down from the mountains, which lasted nearly a quarter of an hour; some of the stones passed over his head, but none struck him. At Gravona his mule fell down the rocks, and he gave it up for lost, but he invoked the aid of Camillus and recovered it unhurt. From all this Dardano concluded that God had revealed future events to Camillus during that ecstasy.

A certain Ilio Urbanuccio, of Bocchianico, left his family, and no one knew where he was. His brother, supposing he might be at Rome, went there to look for him; after a fruitless search of four days he decided to return. But first he went to see F. Camillus, in St. Spirito; as soon as the Saint saw him, he called him by name and said: "Here have you been running about Rome four days without coming to see me, and all your family are lamenting you. Go off to-morrow morning after Mass, for the madman you are looking after is not in Rome, but will come back home in a fortnight." Bernardino was astonished to hear this revelation, but could not understand why his brother was called a madman, for he was quite right when he went away. The next morning Camillus gave him a letter for his nephew Alessandro, who was a great friend of Bernardino, telling him to give it into his own hands and to tell him, from him, that if he did not soon marry, he would be murdered; and that Cassano of Chieti would have killed him before, if he had not fallen into the hands of justice, from which he would soon receive the proper penalty of his misdeeds; and then he offered him money for the expenses of his journey, but withdrew it again, telling him that he would

meet some one on the way who would furnish him with money. Then he concluded, "You have your horse, go now." Bernardino, all amazement, went out of Rome by the gate of St. Lorenzo; before he had gone many steps, he began to experience the truth of the predictions of Camillus; for he met a lame countryman of his, named Angeluccio, who asked him to lend him his horse, for which he gave him twenty-five carlini, enough to enable him to get to Bocchianico. When he got home, he found everyone bewailing him as dead. In a fortnight his brother Ilio returned with his head and beard shaven, because he had been delirious. And, lastly, in a little time Cassano was executed in Chieti, in presence of Alessandro, whose death he confessed to have plotted, in consequence of some quarrels between them. In consequence of these warnings, he took a wife in order to avoid further danger.

In 1612, while the Saint was at Bocchianico, Alessandro was absent from home many days, and no one knew where he was. Camillus often asked Laura, his mother-in-law, for him, who complained that she knew nothing about him. "Never mind," he said, "Alessandro will catch a good illness, and that will domesticate him." The next day he returned with a violent fever. Camillus went to see him and reproved him kindly. But seeing that the fever increased and threatened his life, at the request of Laura, who promised amendment in his name, he shut himself up in the sick man's room and prayed for him; when he came out, he said to Laura: "Be comforted, God has granted him to you this time; but woe be to him if he does not take this occasion of mending his ways." In a few days Alessandro regained his usual health.

In the same year, as the Saint was departing from Bocchianico for Rome, after he was mounted on his horse, he sent for Santa, the wife of Giovanni Grillo, a relative of his, and told her to bring home her son Lelio from the court of Prince Santobono, for his life was in danger. The woman did not follow this advice, which was given in May, and in September Lelio was playing with the other pages and was accidentally killed by a stone.

In a certain city of Italy, where our Fathers had the hospital under their charge, they were falsely accused to the prince, who ordered their expulsion. Camillus went to show him the falseness of the charge and to procure the withdrawal of the order; but he returned to Rome without any success, telling his religious: "I could not convince him; but never mind, he will die within a year, and then he will know the truth." The prince died within a year.

Father Fabiano da St. Benedetto relates that he was dangerously ill in the hospital of St. Spirito, given up by the doctors and preparing for death, when Camillus came to him and said: "Make yourself happy, God does not want you this time. You will recover and become a monk." In three years he entered the Cistercian congregation of St. Pudenziana.

When Father Vincenzo de Falco was in our novitiate at Naples, he suffered from an ulcer in his arm with severe fever, which compelled him to confine himself to the infirmary. The physician pronounced his case very dangerous. Camillus was with him, made the sign of the cross on his forehead, and said to him: "Never fear, my poor friend, be cheerful, it will be nothing." The next morning the doctor found the ulcer so completely healed that there was not even a scar to show where it had been.

Father Cesare Bonino, being in Turin, fell on the ice and broke his leg. The doctor told him that he never would have the free use of it again. Camillus all the while was standing behind the bed making the sign of the cross over the leg, and when the doctor was gone, he said to him: "Keep up your spirits, you will be cured, and one day you will remember what this broken leg means." In a fortnight he was quite well; he continued for many years his labors in the hospitals and was able to walk great distances without the least inconvenience.

At Naples Camillus was hospitably entertained by Signora Bernardina Minutolo. She had been eleven years married and had no family. On recounting her grief to Camillus, the Saint considered a little while and then told her to make herself happy and trust in the good God, for she should have not one child only, but two, and three. After she had been married twenty years, she had a daughter, and the following year another, who was born the day before Camillus died.

It was also noticed that whenever Camillus in his visits exhorted a sick man to prepare himself and to be ready for God's call, or said anything to make him resigned, though there might not be then the least sign of danger, he would infallibly die. If, however, he told him that he must change his life, or told him to be cheerful or the like, he would certainly recover, though the sickness might be dangerous, and death be apparently coming on.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

Camillus Predicts the Punishment of Some Novices Who Returned to the World

Camillus was very ready to receive novices, partly through his desire of saving souls, by offering them a secure shelter in religion from the dangers of the world; and partly for fear of having to account to God for the damnation of those souls whom he might reject. This disposition was so pleasing to God that He favored him with three most distinguished gifts.

One was, that in talking with young men, if he did but put his hand on their heads, he excited in them such a desire to choose the religious state that some, after hearing but one of his discourses, instantly demanded the habit. Such a notion of the power of his words and of the imposition of his hands had got abroad, that many young men avoided speaking to him, for fear that he might put his hand on their head and inveigle them into a religious profession to which they felt a repugnance.

His second gift was a perfect power of discerning whether a man would persevere in his vocation or would turn back. Once as he was leaving Genoa, all the novices there, who were charmed by the sweetness of his conduct, showed great grief at his departure, fearing to lose their vocation when they had lost their good Father and master. Camillus perceived their anxiety, and he assured them that all six of them would persevere and would make their profession.

This prediction was verified, though the devil tried to put every impediment in the way by sickness, accidents, and temptations. About the end of his novitiate,

one of them had an ulcer in his knee, in consequence of which he was near being sent home. Another had a strong temptation to seek for perfection in the life of a hermit.

A third was opposed most vehemently by his own father, who often declared to the superiors that without this his only son he could not find means of subsistence; his complaints were such that the superiors had determined to send the novice back; but on the very morning when he was to be sent away, the father had a scruple about the lies which his paternal affection had prompted him to tell, and he came and confessed that he had other sons and that the assistance of this one was not necessary to him.

The other three experienced many a contradiction; but at last all six overcame the craft of the devil and reached the goal that they desired, and after being professed, they continued till their death to serve God in the order and to give their assistance to the sick and dying with great charity.

On the other hand, Camillus once exhorted a novice not to allow his mother to touch him if he valued his vocation and wished not to lose it. The young man did not obey, but yielded to temptation and returned to the world.

In Bocchianico three young clerics came to him and demanded the habit. He first looked at them one after the other; then he paused a short time and at last answered them: "This straw-fire will soon go out. Go and say your prayers." In fact, he knew in spirit that their idea did not proceed from God, but from the desire to spite their parents who thought them dissipated.

Indeed, it is a certain fact, often and often noticed by our Fathers, that all the novices whom he told that

they would persevere and on whose heads he laid his hands did persevere; those, on the contrary, to whom he did not use this language or these marks of favor abandoned the order. Nor was this preternatural knowledge confined to the case of young men who were present. Sometimes, even at a distance, he discerned the desires of young men to become religious, as may be seen from the example related in Chapter II of this Book.

The third gift of Camillus was, that when any novice relaxed in his first fervor and wished to leave the convent, if he continued obstinate after all means of staying him had been tried, the Saint would predict to him the vengeance of God; and seldom indeed was it that his predictions were not immediately verified. I will record a few such cases, for warning to those who abandon the safe harbor of religion and return to the storms of the world.

In Rome a young man, named Joseph, wished to leave the novitiate. Camillus did all he could to keep him, and at last, after many entreaties and exhortations, he threatened him, with a severe countenance, that if he went away, he would come to a miserable end. The young man departed and returned to Naples, his native place; within fifteen days he was stabbed, and died without the sacraments.

In Messina, another, named Placido, was forced by the tears of his father, who protested that he could not live without him, to leave the order; but the father died within two days after his son's return. Placido was frightened by this sudden death and returned to ask the habit; but while Camillus was making preparations to send him to the novitiate at Naples, one of his brothers, set on by his mother, tried so hard to entice him away, and made such a clatter, that Camillus was obliged to notify

to him the wrath of God and to predict a miserable end for having tried to alienate the mind of his brother from the service of God. Within a year he was barbarously murdered. The novice overcame these difficulties and went to Naples, where he remained some time; but he again fell away and asked to be sent home; Camillus granted his request, predicting at the same time that he would soon feel the wrath of God. Within six months after his return to Messina, he died suddenly without confession or any other sacrament.

In the same place one Vincenzo was twice received by Camillus and twice went away, although he was warned that God would punish him for his unfaithfulness in thus cheating Him twice. The unhappy prediction was too well verified, for he soon afterwards stabbed his mother-in-law, for which he was imprisoned, where he pined away and died, reproaching himself to our Fathers who went to assist him, for not having obeyed Camillus, and declaring with tears that he was suffering the punishment threatened by God for his good.

In Florence a novice, named Silvio, put off the habit, to the great sorrow of Camillus, who entreated him for the love of Jesus Christ not to break his word to God. He returned to Naples, his country, and in a few days fell ill, remaining three days and three nights in a swoon without tasting anything; only at times he cried out: "Help me; for I stand at the tribunal of God, and I see Father Camillus accusing me to Jesus Christ, saying: 'Lord, it is not my fault that this ungrateful man has left the religious life; but he would not listen to me, and now he is dying and asks for assistance'." When his delirium had ceased, his terror still remained; he sent in haste to call our Fathers, and begged them to pray God to pardon him, and asked them to write to Camillus not

to accuse him any more. They did so, and by the Saint's prayers he regained his health and wrote a long letter to the house in Florence, recounting all that he had suffered and exhorting the religious to holy perseverance. He wished to take the habit again, but as his health had suffered much, he was advised by our Fathers to remain in the world, where he became a priest and lived a very virtuous life.

In 1613 one of our priests took offence and thought of going to some other order; he consulted with his brother and made up his plan. God discovered his design to Camillus in prayer; so the latter called the priest aside and said to him: "What are you thinking of? What are you planning, poor man? God will humble you and will frustrate your plans." The religious saw that the Saint had discovered his secret, and for the time he was pacified; but being afterwards again offended, he renewed his old scheme. He again wrote to his brother; but while he was waiting for the reply containing the permission to go to another order, he received instead the sad news of his brother's death, so that his hopes were frustrated, and he was, as Camillus had warned him, greatly humbled.

Another priest, wearied with the hardships of the order and yielding to the temptations of the devil, asked to be dismissed, alleging some frivolous excuses for his inconstancy. St. Camillus, who was much grieved at the loss of this subject, not so much on account of the order as on account of the loss of the poor man's soul, said to him: "Can you, then, make up your mind to leave God who has led you into the land of promise, to return to the onions of Egypt? Oh, your poor soul! Why do you not remember your first resolution and with what fervor and spirit you entered into the order, where for so long this kind Lord has maintained you and fed

you with His divine consolations? Now that He has withdrawn His hand a little, will you turn your back upon Him and spurn Him? Take care what you do. For God bides His time and does not pay every Saturday; but at your last hour when the death-rattle is in your throat, you will remember it. Do not think that you hurt our order by leaving it, for God will raise up men on purpose to help this plant, and even now has provided thousands of nurses who are bringing up subjects to serve it." But the words of Camillus were in vain. The priest was deceived by bright hopes of getting on in the world, and left the order; in a few months, however, having spent all he had, he was attacked with fever and lay at the point of death in a miserable inn. He sent for our Fathers, who went immediately to assist and console him. They found him full of affliction and agitation, and he protested that remorse for having left the order was the sword that pierced his soul with the sharpest pangs.

We will now relate a few instances of the way in which God punished those who persuaded others to abandon religion and return to the world. About the beginning of December, 1592, a young man of very noble family, named Giovanni Andrea, put on the habit in our house at Naples. His father was excessively grieved, the more so as it was a new order, very poor and abject, and, as he thought, unworthy of his son's high birth. He tried every means, tricks, prayers, and promises, to entice him back; and as all this was unavailing, he at last resolved upon using violence. He intended to wait in a carriage in the street leading to the hospital and to have his son seized as he passed by and put with him into the carriage. The evening before the intended execution of the plot, he went to bed well and happy, and the next

morning he was found dead, doubtless struck by God's justice as a warning to fathers who try to prevent their children from following their vocation. All those who were in the secret of the plot were terrified, and they came and confessed their conspiracy.

The young man, who had so courageously endured the assaults of his father, could not resist the temptations of his own self-love. Finding himself master of a rich inheritance, he in a few months left the novitiate and returned to the world. But there the anger of God pursued him; on the very night of his return his mother died, and within a few years he suffered in his own family many ups and downs and great adversities, and at last lost his life in the war in Flanders.

In the same place a young man, named Francesco Antonio, the eldest son of a very powerful nobleman, entered our novitiate. The father, who loved his son exceedingly, was deeply grieved at his resolution and tried to combat his vocation by every means that affection and grief could suggest; but as he could not succeed in Naples, he applied to Rome, and obtained an order that the nuncio should examine his son's vocation. The nuncio, upon this, sent him to one of the principal monasteries, that the abbot might make his report about him. The abbot, who wished to please the father, assailed the inexperienced young man with such subtle arguments that after ten days of resistance he at last yielded. The abbot, in triumph at this victory, made him put aside the habit of a clerk regular, clothed him as a monk, and made him walk through the room, telling him that this dress made him look much handsomer and much more noble than the other. That evening, indeed, he appeared as happy as man can be; not so, however, St. Camillus, who, when he heard of this exploit, said these very words, "God help this abbot."

After about four months some of the most zealous monks of that order raised such a storm against the abbot that, after many examinations, he was sent to Rome, where he was imprisoned and died in great affliction and melancholy. All these circumstances were told us by the novice himself, who, in spite of the devil and the temptations of flesh and blood, soon returned to our order, whither God had called him.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Of Camillus's Gift of Contemplation and His Ecstasies

We have already seen that our Saint had a peculiar gift of prayer, and that he was raised to the highest grades of contemplation. Indeed, he was so absorbed in God, that St. Paul's language might well be applied to him: "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me." This was shown by his walking through the streets with his eyes raised to heaven, and so absorbed that he did not see the persons who saluted him; by his remaining for hours motionless on his knees, or upright (as many can testify), with his eyes fixed on a picture of Jesus or Mary, during which time he did not hear if any one knocked at his door or made a noise close by him, and also by the tears which dropped from his eyes while he prayed and when he said Mass.

Another proof of his sublime degree of contemplation may be drawn from the wonderful appearance of his body either during prayer, especially at the bedside of the sick, or while he was exhorting, admonishing, or in any way speaking of God. On these occasions his face often appeared shining, and rays of light came from his eyes and his forehead. In his prayer he did not reason,

as is usually the case, but immediately he placed himself in the presence of God, he was raised up into intimate union with Him, as might be seen from the sweet colloquies, the loving sighs, and other marks to which he unconsciously gave vent. He had the most sublime ideas of God, of Paradise, and of the mysteries of the faith, and he spoke so profoundly on them that the greatest theologians were astonished.

As he had never studied theology deeply, they must have proceeded from those illuminations, superior to all acquired science, which God gave him in prayer, during which, as St. Thomas teaches, God is used to conduct simple and pure souls in a miraculous way to the understanding of His secrets. In this kind of prayer it is not the man that speaks to God or meditates and considers the Divine mysteries, but it is God who speaks immediately to the man and pours into his soul a clear vision of heavenly things. This was Camillus's usual method of praying. And although his humility was too great to allow him to make known all the heavenly visions and the delights which he experienced in his union with God, yet he could not altogether conceal many things which were revealed to him for the good of his neighbor.

We have in the course of this Life mentioned the ecstasy which the Saint had when the crucifix spoke to him and encouraged him to persevere and found his order. As also that other, in which it was revealed to him that a certain young man wished to enter his order, to whom he wrote and engaged him to follow his vocation. In the same way all the predictions and warnings which we have mentioned were only effects of the visions and interior revelations which God gave him in his prayers.

No man can tell what sublime communications he received from God during the celebration of Mass. It

often happened that God revealed to him at that time the state of certain souls, so that he would suddenly go to the bedside of a sick man and urge him to make another confession, though he might already have made one, because God had revealed to him that it had not been properly made. Sometimes God would reveal to him during Mass the approaching death of persons then quite well, and the recovery of others who were given over by the physicians.

Indeed, his ecstasies may be said to have been continual, for not a day passed without some such revelation being made to him for the good of his neighbor, as may be seen from the foregoing pages. We will only add here that he had also some visions of the Blessed Virgin, of his holy patrons, and especially of angels, who often appeared to him as peasants or travelers, to deliver him and his companions from danger, as has been elsewhere recorded. The reader will remember the visit of the Blessed Virgin, which he had in the house of his sick cousin at Bocchianico.

Sometimes in these ecstasies he was seen lifted from the ground. Thus he was seen by F. Giovanni Trojano, who, on awaking the Fathers early one morning, on entering Camillus's room, found him praying on his knees, lifted two or three palms from the ground, and with bright light issuing from his face and head. He went to inform the superior, who prudently forbade him to mention it, adding that this was not the first time it had occurred.

Probably, also, though his humility never suffered him to mention it, God had informed him of the time of his happy departure in some vision or ecstasy. Certainly he knew it so well, and foretold it so clearly, that it must have been revealed to him in some way. In Book II we

have seen how on his arrival in Rome from Genoa in the last year of his life, he said, "I am come to leave my bones here," and how he begged the F. Prefect to keep the holy oils in the house, for they would be wanted first for Brother Gio. M. Veronese and then for himself. And how, when the infirmarian asked him whether he would take a little jelly, he answered, "Wait a quarter of an hour, and I shall be refreshed," and in exactly a quarter of an hour he died, at the time he foretold, according to the Roman Breviary in the lesson for his feast. Then again the certainty which in his last hours he had of his eternal salvation, though all his life he had been so fearful, could only have arisen from the revelation of God.

During his whole sickness he was so absorbed in God, and so often breathed forth the most tender affections of love, thankfulness, and devotion, that it did not appear to be a man that was praying, but an angel already enjoying the beatific vision. And, lastly, when he received the Holy Viaticum, his face appeared to shine, and his eyes were fixed on the Blessed Sacrament, as though he saw there the most holy Humanity of our Saviour. All these circumstances prove that at that time God favored him with some heavenly vision.

Hence we may conclude that, besides his other gifts, St. Camillus was favored with the gift of a most sublime contemplation, accompanied with ecstasies and supernatural revelation. A worthy reward of that most ardent charity which always burned in his heart, so that he might be justly compared to the seraphim.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

*Miracles Worked by God, through the Merits of Camillus,
during His Lifetime*

God, who declares that He will glorify those who seek to increase His glory, fulfilled His promise in the case of His servant Camillus, who for that sole end had labored and suffered so much, for through his intercession special miracles were wrought in favor of the sick whom he visited, many of whom he delivered from death. Of these we shall give only a few, lest we should be too prolix, and reserving for the succeeding chapter those which took place subsequently to his death, shall here mention those which occurred in his lifetime, and which were juridically attested in the Processes, either by the subjects of the favors themselves, or by other eye- and ear-witnesses.

In May, 1589, Alessandro Gallo, a novice, was nearly deprived of the power of speech by a malignant fever, which had reduced him to such a state that on going to the hospital, our people recited the chaplet for him by the way, fully expecting to find him dead on their return. St. Camillus entered the infirmary, and having sent out the other religious, asked the sufferer whether he would like to be cured and to persevere in the congregation, and on his making an affirmative sign with his head, the Saint laid his hand on his eyes, took off his beretta, looked up to heaven, and prayed for him, bidding him be in good spirits, since he would not die of that illness. On the following day the physicians on their return found him free from fever and completely cured. This cure is attested in the Processes by Gallo himself.

In 1591 Onofrio de Lellis, a cousin of the Saint, was seized by apoplexy in Bocchianico, and for three months lay without the power of motion, so that his recovery was considered hopeless. The Saint, who at that time was residing in the house of the invalid, frequently prayed for him, and the servants declared that they had seen him in his own apartment resplendent with light. One morning he entered the sick man's room and said to him: "For this time God has forgiven you, see that you thank Him by a good life." From that moment Onofrio, whose skin was blackened by the violence of the seizure, began to amend, and in a short time was restored to perfect health.

In the same district Domenico Rezzo, who was at the point of death, was cured by the visit and prayers of St. Camillus, who had come to recommend his soul to God.

Francesca Torricella, of the same place, was also seized by apoplexy, and was for six months unable to move, so that the attendants could only arrange her bed by turning her in a sheet. St. Camillus, on visiting her, told her to rise, and on her declaring her inability to move, gave her his hand, by the help of which she quickly raised herself, to her own great joy and the amazement of all present. Her strength daily increased, till at the month's end she was perfectly well.

After some time the same Torricella was attacked by a fever, which for an entire year would yield to no remedies, so that the medical attendants gave her over, declaring that she had but a few hours to live. Hearing this, St. Camillus, though the wax lights had already been purchased for her funeral, approached her bed, where he found her perfectly senseless, so that she made no reply

when called. He, however, began to pray, and after some time again called her. She then appeared to awake as from a profound sleep and asked the Saint for some refreshment. He gave her a little broth and told her to take some rest. In a few days she was perfectly restored.

In the year 1592 Paolo Renda, one of our professed brothers at Rome, was afflicted by continued fever. St. Camillus went to see him, and on his inquiring how he was, he replied that the violence of the fever gave him no rest. Camillus then laid his hands on his head, telling him not to doubt, as God had not called him to the order for only a short time. The fever instantly ceased, and the brother survived thirty years.

In the year 1594 F. Mortola of Naples was attacked by malignant fever, accompanied by erysipelas in the face, and was given over by the physicians. St. Camillus was attending him, when, turning his eyes piteously towards him, the invalid told him that the erysipelas was extending internally towards his heart, which it had nearly reached. Camillus looked at him and plainly said, "Never fear, trust in the Lord, for you will not die of this disease." These words, and the faith of him who uttered them, gave courage to the invalid, who perceived that the erysipelas had changed its course to the shoulders. In a few days he was out of danger.

In the year 1596 Luca Moneta, one of our novices in Naples, was afflicted by an equally dangerous erysipelas, so that in consequence of the extraordinary swelling of his head and throat, he could not swallow even a few drops of water without danger of suffocation. Happily for him St. Camillus at this moment arrived from Rome, and having heard of his danger, before he had even taken off his boots, he went at once to the infirmary, and was indeed surprised at the extraordinary swelling in

the head of the sinking novice. The latter particularly complained of pain in the left side of his neck, and the Saint in compassion gently touched the part, and making the sign of the cross over him, said cheerfully that he must not fear, for he would soon be cured. The pain instantly ceased, the swelling subsided, and on that very evening he was able to swallow bread. Signor Gio. Andrea Maluso visited him the next morning, and seeing only one cheek swollen, was much astonished, but when the invalid had informed him of the visit of Camillus, "God forgive you," said he, "why did you not make him touch the other part, for then you would have been entirely cured." However, in three days he was perfectly well.

Signor Gio. Battista Balsamo of Naples declared that, being cruelly tormented by gout, the pain ceased when St. Camillus made the sign of the cross over him.

The same thing was declared to F. Giomei, one of our community in Rome, by a cousin of Gio. Francesco Ugolino, who suffered from a cancer so malignant that she felt as if torn to pieces by dogs; but a visit from St. Camillus, and the sign of the cross which he made over the wound, sufficed to remove the pain as completely as though she had no disease.

In the year 1596 three of the first physicians in Rome, Signors Zecca, Barga, and Vergato, gave up as hopeless the case of our novice Francesco Antonio Balsamo, and after various remedies and consultations, decided that the only hope left arose from the circumstance of his youth. All this was told to Camillus, who on the same day went to visit him and encouraged him by telling him that, notwithstanding the prognostics of the physicians, he was in no danger. Seeing that his head was uncovered, he asked him if he had no cap, and on the invalid's say-

ing that he had lost it in bed, it was carefully searched for, but could not be found; Camillus ordered the infirmarian to get another, but the infirmarian could not find the key of the linen-press. Camillus then went in haste to his own room and, taking his night-cap, placed it on the novice's head, and then, having made a short prayer and signed the cross on his head, he went away. He had not gone many steps from the infirmary, when, to the amazement of those present, the invalid was seized by a violent fever and such abundant perspiration that two mattresses were moistened by it. Every one supposed that death was approaching, and many others of the household crowded in, who also observed that in the midst of this perspiration the patient shivered with cold, and that his complexion had assumed a strange yellow tint. But after two hours had been passed in this paroxysm, the invalid became perfectly well, to the great amazement of the physicians, who, on their return in the evening, found him free from every symptom of fever or any other illness. The youth afterwards declared that no sooner had Camillus placed the cap on his head, than he felt himself internally affected and disordered by that paroxysm which had been followed by health.

In the year 1599 Domenico Romito of Camerino, a coachman in the service of Cardinal San Giorgio, at Rome, was so terribly bitten by a horse in the left arm, close to the hand, that the bone was fractured and the veins opened, and he remained almost lifeless with his hand hanging from the arm, to which it was attached only by the tendons. He was carried in a state of insensibility to the hospital of Santo Spirito, and the surgeons thought that his life could be saved only by the amputation of the hand. While the surgeon was preparing for the operation, St. Camillus, moved to pity for the unfortunate man,

begged him to delay the operation for a short time, saying that he hoped the Lord would heal him without that painful remedy. As they all thought him a saint, they immediately stopped. St. Camillus knelt in prayer by the bedside, then rising, made the sign of the cross on the forehead of the wounded man, and blew into his ears. After this breath the dying man recovered his senses and seemed restored from death to life. The Saint then pounded some vessels of terra cotta, and having reduced them to powder, returned, and uniting the hand to the arm, applied the powder to the fracture, and recommended the man to the care of the surgeons, who were much surprised at what the servant of God had done; but far greater was their surprise, when on the departure of Camillus, they saw the hand as firmly connected with the arm as though there had been no fracture, and they then perceived that the Saint had used the powder for the concealment of the miracle. Four months after the death of St. Camillus the same Domenico, hearing of the prodigies which had been wrought at his tombs, spontaneously went to our Fathers and related this fact, authenticating it by oath and by a writing attested by witnesses, bearing date, November 16, 1614, and by showing to every one the arm which had been fractured quite sound and well, and without the slightest mark of the cruel bite by which it had been so much injured.

When St. Camillus left Genoa for Naples, in the year 1600, at his departure he called the Fathers and brothers one by one and asked each if he was in want of anything. On his going to Father Bosso, the latter told him that he was suffering from dysentery. The Saint laid his hands on his head, saying, "You will recover. Work now that you have time, chiefly in aid of the sick poor, and remember that the observance of the Institute will obtain

eternal blessings for you." The Father instantly felt a general warmth come over him, his strength revived, and the fever and dysentery ceased.

In the following year, while St. Camillus was in Florence, a constable was brought to the hospital with so violent a quinsy that, his throat being completely closed, he was unable either to make his confession or to receive Holy Communion, so that Extreme Unction was administered to him without delay. Camillus heard of this and sighed deeply from a fear lest his religious should have been negligent. He ran quickly to the bedside of the dying man, and causing Father Testetta, who was recommending his soul, to give place to him, he knelt down and laid his hand on his head, keeping it there for the space of a miserere, after which he went away. Hardly was he gone, when the dying man, awaking as from a profound sleep, got out of bed and went through the hospital, seeking and loudly calling for the Father who had cured him by laying his hand on his head. All the people of the hospital were stupefied at so evident a miracle, and the officer in whose favor it had been wrought, as he was healed in body, completed the cure in his soul, by confessing and communicating before he returned to his own house, where he was received with a joy which may be easily imagined, after so marvelous an occurrence.

On the following morning St. Camillus again entered the hospital, but hardly was he perceived, when every one pointed to him, saying: "There is he who healed him!" so that the humble Saint instantly fled in confusion from the place.

The fame of this astounding miracle spread through the city of Florence, and four days had not elapsed, when, as St. Camillus was conversing with Fathers Ilario and

Giomei, and giving them some directions, one Antonio, a knife-grinder, prostrated himself before him, and kissing his feet, began to tell him how he had spent his all in doctors and medicines, in consequence of an obstinate quartan ague, which had for many years tormented him, but without obtaining any relief; and he therefore besought him to help him by restoring him to health. The humble Saint was most mortified at this and raised his eyes to heaven with a complaining expression, as though these two religious had counseled the poor man to apply to him; then turning to the suppliant: "God forgive you, brother," said he, "can I give you health? You mistake;" and he repeated these words many times. But the sick man persisted and commended himself to him still more earnestly. Then Camillus, that he might not send him away disconsolate, pointed to the altar of the Most Holy Sacrament, saying: "Well, brother, go there and say five Aves to the five wounds of our Lord, for He can and will restore you to health." The invalid quickly obeyed, and was as quickly restored to health, without being ever again troubled by the quartan ague.

In the same city of Florence a little boy, the son of Nero del Nero, was dying of an imposthume in the head. He was named Philip, and was two years of age. He had already lost the use of speech and gave no sign of consciousness when called by his own mother. The family was most devoted to St. Camillus, who had been sponsor for the child. They therefore sent at once to fetch him. He went without delay, made the sign of the cross upon his head, and said to the deeply afflicted parents: "This child will come to no harm." He then called him by name, and the child immediately awoke from his lethargy and answered, to the great joy of all around him, and the imposthume quickly breaking, he was entirely

relieved. This wonderful and signal favor was related by the Countess Pitigliano, sister to Sigr. Nero.

In the same year Signora Margarita Pastore, wife of the engineer of the city, was staying in Palermo and was tormented by such an intense headache that for many weeks she had done nothing but groan and implore relief. When Father de Barberis, her confessor, told her of the arrival of St. Camillus, she entreated him to obtain for her a visit from him. The Saint went and simply made the sign of the cross over her. She was greatly relieved from that very moment, and at the end of three days was perfectly well and free from all pain. Grateful for this favor, besides never being weary of telling it to every one whom she met, when Camillus left Palermo for Messina, she would furnish him with boots and everything, including the money necessary for his journey.

In the same city D. Luigi Riccio, son of Stefano Riccio, syndic of the place, and a great benefactor of our people, was dangerously ill of a most violent fever. His mother, who was in the utmost affliction at his having been given over by the physicians, had hardly heard of the arrival of St. Camillus, when she sent to beg that he would condescend to visit him. Camillus could not completely satisfy her wishes, but he sent Brother Gio. Davila to tell the invalid and his mother to trust in God, and they should be consoled; and so it came to pass, for after this message he began to amend and in a few days was completely restored.

About the month of May, in the year 1604, Marchisello Locatelli, one of our professed in Rome, had received the holy oils and had fallen into his agony. He was reduced to such extremity that, already, according to custom, the strokes of the bell had summoned the religious to pray for him. Nevertheless, St. Camillus,

who attended him and held up his head with one hand, boldly declared that he would not die. The medical men present ridiculed him, saying that he could not survive a quarter of an hour, and in the same way some of our people muttered: "This time F. Camillus is no true prophet." But both the one and the other were confounded, for the dying man rallied, regained his health, and survived many years.

In the following year Giuseppe Russo, a novice in Naples, had received Extreme Unction and was in immediate danger of death. St. Camillus, however, did not think that his recovery should be despaired of yet, and besought the physician to order something else and not to give him up so soon. The physician smiled and replied that prescriptions were useless, as he could survive but a few hours. Camillus, however, was not easy, but with greater earnestness renewed his entreaty, till the angry physician began to write and prescribed some pills, muttering as he wrote: "These pills will but hasten his end." St. Camillus remained all night in the sick-room, administering these pills with his own hand and recommending the patient to God. At daybreak the physician returned and inquired of the porter at what hour the novice had died. The porter replied that the fever had ceased at midnight; but the physician, whose name was Gio. Antonio Bruno, would give no credit to his assertion, but ran to the sick man's room to satisfy himself, when, however, he saw him without fever and completely cured. "This," he exclaimed, in amazement, "can only be the work of Father Camillus!"

Father Scipio Carozza, one of our priests at the Maddalena, was in such danger that the physicians had already ordered that all the sacraments should be administered to him. Camillus went to see him, and laying his

hands on his head, said to him: "Fear not, you will recover. The Lord has forgiven you for this time." On the following morning the physician found him perfectly recovered.

In the year 1606 Cosimo Lenzo, one of our novices in Naples, was attacked by a fever so contagious that it was necessary to separate him from the other sick persons for fear of infection; but as he had heard that all the sick whom St. Camillus signed on the forehead with the sign of the cross did not fail to recover, he, on the Saint's paying him a visit, besought him to make that holy sign over him. The tender-hearted Saint gratified him in this, and he quickly recovered, and to the end of his life did not fail to mention this fact, as a special favor imparted to him through St. Camillus.

In Naples our professed brother Vincenzo di Falco lay in the most imminent danger, in consequence of an abscess in the arm, attended by a fever so malignant that when the physician felt his pulse, he immediately washed his hands in lemon-juice, lest he should take it. St. Camillus saw this, and he also felt his pulse, and making the sign of the cross on his forehead, said: "Poor fellow, never fear, you will do well." And on the next day the fever and abscess disappeared.

In the same year great fears were entertained for the life of Giacomo Melani, a professed brother in Milan, and as he had never seen Father Camillus, he greatly desired to see him before his death. While he was thinking of this, he heard the door-bell ring. It was actually the Saint, who had that moment arrived from Rome, and who, according to his custom, had gone directly to the infirmary. Seeing him, the invalid extended his arm, as if to clasp his neck, and besought his help. St. Camillus then took his head in his hands, saying: "Poor fel-

low. Fear not, you will not die; you have still penance to do." He instantly began to amend, and in a few days the illness disappeared entirely.

Father Alfonso Muzio was suffering in Naples from a mortal disease, and as he could not be nursed by St. Camillus, as he would have desired, the Saint being gone to Bocchianico, he, with great faith, invoked him, though far away; when, wonderful to relate, St. Camillus heard him, immediately appeared to him, and comforted him, saying: "Never fear: be cheerful," and so departed, and with the Saint the illness also departed, for Alfonso rose from his bed completely cured.

St. Camillus was traveling from Bocchianico to Loreto with Brother Orazio Porgiano and two seculars. When they came to the plains of Pescara, the horse of Orazio stumbled and fell, and the rider, being under him, was so much crushed that he trembled all over and seemed about to expire, more especially as he was aged and in ill health. The two seculars saw the accident and raised the horse. St. Camillus, who was some way in advance, saw it also and blessed him with the sign of the cross, invoking the holy name of Jesus in his behalf. Nothing more was wanted, for Orazio rose himself without any injury whatever, and was able to continue his journey as though nothing had occurred.

In the year 1606 there dwelt in a convent at a little distance from Savona a religious priest, named Fra Aliprandro, who, having gone one evening to the garden to gather herbs, felt himself stung in a finger of the left hand. He made no account of the sting at the time, but the pain and swelling of the hand increasing, and no skilful surgeon being near, the wound began to mortify. The unhappy man then caused himself to be removed to the first hospital in Genoa, with a resolution to return

no more to his order. He was carried in a litter, bearing the number 134, and became so much worse that amputation of the hand was thought necessary, and only delayed till he should have somewhat revived, and the entire mortification of the wound should have lessened the pain. About this time a malignant fever was added to his sufferings, which reduced him to such extremity that the physicians, despairing of a cure, declared that he could live only two or three days.

In this state he sent to beseech St. Camillus to be pleased to come to his bedside. The Saint went and conversed for some time with him, making him promise a change of life and a return to his order. He then made the sign of the cross over the wounded hand, and on his departure assured him that he had prayed for him. On the following morning Signor Giovanni, a skilful surgeon, unbound the hand to dress it, and, to his great amazement, found it all but entirely cicatrized. He asked who had visited the invalid, and was told that he had been visited by no one but F. Camillus. "It is enough," replied the surgeon, "he is cured;" and, in fact, in a few days he left the hospital perfectly cured, declaring everywhere that his hand and his life had been restored by Father Camillus.

He did not, however, keep his promise, but instead of returning to the convent, engaged himself as chaplain in a galley of Don Carlo Doria and passed with the troops into Piedmont, to see the camps of Spain and Savoy, which were then at war with each other. There, as he was mounted on a bastion belonging to the trenches of the Spanish camp, he was so shattered by a cannon-ball that he could no longer be identified.

In the following year St. Camillus set out from Genoa for Milan, in company with Father Bosso, and being near

San Lazzaro, the vetturino stopped Father Bosso's horse to put his great coat on it, and then, that they might overtake St. Camillus, who had gone on, he began to beat the horse so sharply that he set off in such speed as to knock down a boy about ten years of age, who was so much trampled on that he seemed to be dead. As soon as they overtook St. Camillus, he asked the cause of the delay, and had hardly heard the account from Father Bosso, than he exclaimed: "Oh, poor child! let us go to his assistance!" Turning back, they found him stretched on the ground and writhing like a serpent. They asked him where he felt the most pain, and he pointed with his hand to his stomach. Camillus then, raising his eyes to heaven, made the sign of the cross over him and went away. But on his going away, the child rose quickly from the ground full of joy and without any injury, to the great amazement of the vetturino, who knew how much he had been hurt by the horse.

Another horse, on which St. Camillus was riding, trod so cruelly on the foot of Alessandro de Lellis that, besides the intense pain, he was afraid that he should become lame. The Saint laid his hands on his head, and all pain immediately disappeared; and it is worthy of observation that, though this horse was restive and wild, as soon as he had Camillus on his back, he became gentle and quiet, to the astonishment of Alessandro, who had lent him to the Saint.

Fra Vincenzo, of Carignano, guardian of the conventuals in Bocchianico, had been seriously wounded in the hand and often bewailed his misfortune, which prevented him from celebrating Mass or playing on the organ. One morning St. Camillus went to say Mass in the church, and the good Fra Vincenzo, who venerated him with peculiar devotion, waited till he had washed his hands,

and then washed his own in the same water and wiped them on the same towel, by which unusual remedy he was so much relieved as to be able to celebrate and play from that very time.

In the same year, and in the same district, Francesco Antonio Grillo, having gone one Sunday to his vineyard, was cutting some thorns with a pruning-hook, when he cut the thumb of his left hand severely. On returning home, he felt great pain and applied to the Saint by letter. On the following morning the wound was healed, the pain had ceased, and the thumb was perfectly cured.

The same Grillo, on another occasion, was seized by such a violent and obstinate fever that he was given over by the physicians, so that his son, Gio. Battista, had gone to Chieti to buy mourning. He there met St. Camillus, and having sorrowfully told him of his father's dangerous state, was assured that the illness was not mortal, and that Camillus had prayed to God for his father's recovery. Giovanni believed the servant of God and returned to Bocchianico, where he found his father entirely free from fever. The next day Camillus went himself to Bocchianico, when the invalid, who had risen from his bed to thank him, came to meet him. Camillus was vexed that he should have left his bed too hastily, and said: "By this haste you will get a quartan ague, which will last the whole winter," which prediction was exactly fulfilled.

In the same year Pietro Caprafico was also ill of a malignant fever, which had reduced him to extremity, so that the physician gave him but a few days to live. In this condition he sent to beg Camillus to visit him, but the Saint, being then unable to satisfy his desire, sent one of his religious to assure him that he need not fear death, for the blessed God had granted him a favor. And so it

was, for in a few days the invalid arose from his bed in perfect health.

While staying in Rome, Camillus heard that Caecilia de Abundis was in Mantua, oppressed by such an illness that she was quite crippled by it and had been given over by the physicians. Camillus, who had been particularly intimate with her father, moved to compassion, had a letter written to her, in which he told her not to fear, for God would restore her health, so that no part of her body should be affected by the disease, and so it came to pass.

At another time this same Caecilia was attacked by most intense pain in the head, which was instantly cured by the application of a little linen cap which had been worn by St. Camillus.

While the Saint was attending at the hospital of the Annunziata at Naples, one Gian Giacomo di Lauria of Celento, who was totally blind, was brought there in a high fever. One day in attempting to move, he unfortunately fell out of bed and began to cry for help. The Saint, with another of our priests, ran to his assistance, and having raised him and replaced him in his bed, the former laid his hand on his head, exhorting him to be patient, and on going away, said: "My brother, trust in the Lord." Hardly were these words uttered, when, on opening his eyes, he found that he could see perfectly, and being at the same time cured of his fever, he cried aloud: "A miracle! a miracle!" The amazement of the officials, the nurses, the patients, and all who were present, when they saw the blind man walk without a guide, and return to his own house, was indescribable. Still greater was the amazement of the physician Conti and one Gio. Domenico, the storekeeper of the hospital, who were better able to appreciate the marvelous event. Meanwhile, Camillus, in

virtue of holy obedience, commanded the priest, who had been his companion when he lifted up the blind man from the ground and, therefore, an eye-witness of this great prodigy, never to make it known, as it was not his work, but that of God. The priest kept silence during the lifetime of St. Camillus, but after his happy passage, he made a juridical attestation of the fact, together with the physician, the storekeeper, and many others in whose presence it had been performed.

Vittoria di Ferrante of Naples had for many years led a most painful life in consequence of a sciatica, which obliged her always to walk with her body bent and to support herself by a staff. She had a brother among the religious of St. Camillus, at whose entreaty the Saint paid her a visit. The afflicted lady gave him a detailed account of her sufferings and implored his prayers. He listened with great benignity, and then making the sign of the cross on her forehead, said: "Never fear, for you will recover and suffer no more from this illness." From that hour she became perfectly well and remained so for many years, as she herself deposed on oath, as did Gio. Domenico Comes, who had attended her as her physician during the illness.

In the year 1611, on the 11th of June (the professed brother Gio. Tommaso Copola was attacked in Rome by a fever, and the physician, Tommaso Condopoli, thought unfavorably of his case. St. Camillus was at that time staying in the hospital of Santo Spirito, and he inquired of Father Corrado how the brother was. The Father replied that he was very ill and that the doctor had lost all hope of his recovery. Camillus then said: "When your reverence goes to the house, salute him in my name and tell him not to fear, though his illness is dangerous, as the Lord for this time will show him mercy." Father

Corrado faithfully bore the message to the invalid, who was greatly comforted by it and regained his health, to the general amazement, as he had been given over by all about him.

In the same year, on the 13th of August, Giuliano Barbieri, who was attached to the hospital, was taken ill and was lying in the apartment assigned to those of noble birth; being greatly oppressed by the illness, he made a general confession to the above-mentioned Father Corrado; after which he entreated him to commend him to the prayers of Father Camillus. To this recommendation the Saint replied: "I, though unworthy, will pray for him." At the end of two days Father Corrado went again to see the sufferer, who, in the opinion of the physicians, was in imminent danger. The Father therefore sought to console him, and among other things told him that Father Camillus had promised to commend him to the Lord. Giuliano was much encouraged by the charitable promise and besought him to repeat his request. Camillus then replied: "Tomorrow, which will be the Assumption of our Lady, I will pray for him in the Mass." As soon as the Saint had ended his Mass on that solemn day, he called Father Girolamo de Auxiliis, saying: "Go and visit Messer Giuliano, and say: 'The Father salutes you and tells you not to fear, for the Lord will grant you grace, but on condition that you amend your life and often confess and communicate.' " On the following night, August 16, he grew so much worse that, having lost his senses, they were obliged to give him Extreme Unction. Nevertheless, when Father Corrado visited him on the 17, he found him without fever, and heard him say: "This night I was going quickly into the

other world, but God has given me life through the prayers of Father Camillus."

In the year 1612 Orazio, an old officer of the Pope, and a man who had shown great charity towards the patients of the hospital, was seized by apoplexy and chilly pains, which altogether confined him to his bed. St. Camillus was at that time in Naples, and as they were in familiar correspondence, Orazio wrote him a letter, in which, after describing his illness, he commended himself to his prayers. Here is the Saint's exact reply: "I am much grieved at the illness, but I believe, and hope in the Lord, that in this hour you will be cured." In fact, Orazio was cured when the letter arrived, and having made a calculation, he found that the illness had left him at the very time when the Saint wrote, so that he never ceased to proclaim the miracle as one worthy of the goodness and merits of St. Camillus.

In the same year Signor Muzio Carullo was seized with serious illness at the court of his Serene Highness, the Duke of Mantua, and as he was most anxious to see Father Camillus, knowing that he was to pass through the city, he sent to request a visit from him. Camillus could not refuse and therefore went without delay. As soon as he had saluted the invalid and given him some restorative, the attendants asked what he thought of him. He bent his head a little, and then turning to the invalid with a cheerful air, told him to take courage, for he would be cured; as indeed he was, to the great joy and amazement of the whole household.

In the year 1613 Gio. Battista Grillo, a physician of Bocchianico, was tormented by a serious pain in the head, attended by such a high fever that no remedy could alleviate it. A letter of Father Camillus was at last applied,

when the fever and pain immediately ceased, so that the invalid regarded his cure as a real miracle.

In the same year, on the 4th of July, when St. Camillus passed through Milan for the last time, Margarita, the wife of Galeazzo Pellegrini, being near her confinement, had not sufficient strength to give birth to the child. Antonia, her sister, sent to entreat Father Camillus to pray for her. The Saint's reply was, that she must conform herself to the will of God, for the infant would be saved, but the mother must be offered in sacrifice to the Divine Majesty. These words were verified by the event. The mother was delivered with much ease, but nevertheless expired a few hours afterwards, and the infant, which was living and healthy, received in baptism the name of Francesco Camillo.

Many other cases might be related, which are omitted for brevity's sake, and we here conclude by stating a fact, which was proved by experience of thousands: that, whenever St. Camillus, on visiting an invalid, encouraged him and exhorted him not to fear, he invariably recovered; but that, if, on the contrary, he exhorted him to unite himself to God and to prepare himself for the accomplishment of His holy will, he might regard himself as doomed. Consequently, whenever he entered our infirmary, all were most attentive in observing his every word and movement.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Miracles and Favors Wrought by God through the Intercession of Camillus, after His Happy Death

In the long period of more than three centuries which has elapsed since the blessed death of the Saint, the Most High has never ceased to work miracles in favor of those

who have in faith had recourse to his intercession; constantly honoring him by stupendous prodigies and signal favors, which are so numerous that the record of them would fill many volumes. We therefore gather the fullest and fairest ears from this abundant harvest, by relating those miracles only which are the most signal, or which have been confirmed by the Apostolic Processes, or which, from their recent occurrence, are best calculated to inspire a high idea of the merits of St. Camillus, and to awaken in the reader a greater desire of obtaining the protection of so miraculous a saint by acts of devout homage.

To begin, then, from the disinterment of the body of St. Camillus, which took place on the 8th of May, in the holy year 1625, about eleven years after his death. This was incredibly marvelous, for the blessed body was beautiful, fresh, flexible, and entire in every part, as though it had been animated and living; and to the still greater amazement of all present, when a surgeon who was there, impelled by a superior power, made an incision in the side, there flowed a fluid of marvelous fragrance, which continued to flow in great abundance during the six days that the body was kept above ground for the satisfaction of the devout.

Among the numbers who, attracted by the fame of the miracle, ran to ask favors of the Saint, was one Margarita, a Bolognese. Breaking through the crowd of people and impetuously rushing the band of soldiers, she approached the bier on which the sacred deposit was lying, and with holy ardor placed on it her nephew, five years of age, named Giovannino, with great faith entreating St. Camillus to deliver him from a disease of the bones, which had affected him generally, but more especially his right arm, which he was unable to use. What she asked, she obtained. The contraction of the right arm was instant-

ly removed, the fourth finger, which had been frightfully distorted, and attached to the arm, returned to its proper place, and the woman joyfully took up the child perfectly restored.

Another child of the same age, named Vittoria Turriani, was, in consequence of some disease peculiar to infants, a cripple in her hands and feet. The mother, full of confidence, took a rosary belonging to the Saint, who a few days before had flown to heaven, and applied it to the crippled limbs of the child, invoking the Saint, and immediately saw her free and well.

Diambra Spina, aged forty, was considered by the physicians to be in a confirmed dropsy, and had been attended by them for many months. Vain, however, was their skill, and the unfortunate woman, being no longer able to stand in consequence of the excessive swelling, endured a most painful confinement to her bed. Having been pronounced incurable, while she bewailed her misfortune, she remembered the marvels which the Lord had wrought through the merits of St. Camillus, recently deceased; therefore, in the hope of being relieved, she desired to visit his sepulcher. But the execution of her desire was rendered almost impossible on account of her extreme debility and great weight of her body. However, taking courage, she went feebly on, leaning partly on her husband and partly on a staff. Prostrate on the ground, and with her arms extended over the tomb, she prayed with many tears, imploring the aid of the Saint. On rising, she found that her prayer had been partially answered, for the swelling was diminished, and she was less oppressed by the weight of her body; she therefore walked home with less inconvenience, and on her returning the next day to renew her supplications at the holy tomb, the miracle was completed. She threw away her stick,

no longer needed support, and the swelling disappeared, nor was she ever after liable to a similar attack.

Giuseppe Smeraldi, a little boy of four years, had never been able to articulate a single word, so that he was supposed to be perfectly dumb; besides which, he had such defective organization that all his limbs were affected by a complication of maladies, which resisted every remedy. He was fearfully contracted from the waist downwards, and was subject to frequent epileptic convulsions, while a slow fever, which consumed him insensibly, boiled in his veins. Being reduced to extremity, his funeral garments were prepared. His sorrowful mother ran to the tomb of the Saint, and having moved the child over it many times, laid him on it. The child instantly fell into a placid sleep and had hardly opened his eyes, when he acquired the use of his limbs and of his tongue, after which the fever entirely ceased, together with every other ailment, and he returned home talking and walking rapidly, and ever after preserved the health thus miraculously obtained.

In the month of March, 1685, Don Giuseppe Garai, of that cavalry regiment called "de' Miglioni," in the city of Madrid, while riding in a meadow near that city, received a shot from a pistol loaded with three balls, in the region of the heart. The shot had, from a motive of revenge, been treacherously aimed at him by a wretched man, named Giovanni. On receiving the wound, Don Giuseppe thought himself a dead man, but afterwards feeling neither pain nor exhaustion, he sprang cheerfully from his horse, in order to examine the supposed wound, which from the burn and hole in his dress he thought must be very large and deep. But he soon perceived that, excepting in his clothes, he had suffered no injury, in virtue of a piece of the shirt of St. Camillus, which he wore

about him in a little purse sown to that part of his vest which lay over his heart. This was still further proved by two of the balls, one of which was found entire in the same purse, and the other quite flattened between the purse and the vest. Full of consternation at the danger he had escaped, and still more full of gratitude to his most beneficent deliverer, he quickly went with two witnesses to make a deposition of this signal miracle before the public courts.

Bernardino Pegorino had for many days suffered from a malignant fever, which on the fifteenth day was declared incurable by the physicians, who said that he could live but a short time. On a suggestion that he should commend himself to St. Camillus, he caused his picture to be brought, together with a little dust from his rooms. Hardly were these things in the room, when the fever left his body; and perceiving the instantaneous cure, he suddenly quitted his bed and, to the admiration of all present, left the house, publishing everywhere the glories of his beneficent liberator.

Francesca Lassi, a woman of Rome, had for five years suffered from a scrofulous tumor on the left of her neck, which greatly disfigured her. The flesh, which had grown round the orifice of this abscess, had formed, as it were, two ridges, resembling lips, which occasioned constant spasms, besides which she was obliged always to bend her neck on one side, so that she had acquired the nickname of wryneck (*Coletta*). The discharge from this abscess was also so pestilential as to nauseate even the professional attendants themselves, so that having applied many ineffectual remedies, they at last gave up the case. A young man, who lived in the same house, accidentally found a packet of the dust mentioned above and was suddenly inspired with a desire to apply it to the re-

lief of the unfortunate Coletta. He went to find her and in faith applied the packet to her neck, together with a picture of the Saint, with which he made the sign of the cross over the abscess. All pain instantly ceased, the ridges, or lips, disappeared, the orifice of the abscess completely closed, and nothing remained but a red mark in the place where it had been.

Anna Lavinia Pieretti had for many yars been greatly troubled by a malignant erysipelas, settled in the bone of the left knee, which was converted into a festering wound, with a very large and deep cavity occasioning spasmodic pains, burning fever, vomitings, and contraction of the tendons of the leg, through which sufferings, and those occasioned by the remedies vainly tried by the professional men during their long attendance, she was reduced to such extremity that the last sacraments were administered. Her afflicted mother wrapped a little of the dust in a small piece of rag and, with lively confidence in the merits of St. Camillus, bound it over the gangrened knee. Instantly the girl sprang from the bed joyfully, without pain, fever, or contraction, and was able to seat herself at table and take her meals with her family. She slept tranquilly that night and the next day was perfectly well, the concavity of the wound being almost filled to the margin with new living flesh, to the amazement of the surgeon, who from the extremity in which he had seen her the day before thought that she must have died.

Antonio Sabatini was extremely reduced by a violent continued fever of many months' standing, and was at last attacked by a cruel quinsy with imminent danger of death. In these circumstances he received a letter from his sister in Rome, inclosing a little mortar from the room of St. Camillus. The invalid took it with faith and was

instantly cured, so that his answer to his sister's letter was an account of his instantaneous cure.

Domenica Davati, an old woman of seventy, was afflicted by gout in her hands and feet, together with asthma and a malignant fever, which had brought her almost to her grave. Her daughter, seeing all human remedies were unavailing, turned to the Saint, to whom they earnestly commended her, and caused her to take a draught of water in which a little of the mortar had been mixed. At the ninth hour of the night St. Camillus presented himself to the dying woman and with a majestic and affable air saluted her three times and said: "I have granted you the favor;" saying which, he disappeared. At the same moment Domenica was not only delivered from fever but also from her habitual indispositions. She afterwards recognized the features of her deliverer in a picture of the Saint and positively declared to those about her that it was he who had appeared to her in the vision.

Antonio Crescentini, who was afflicted by malignant fever, had called in our religious to aid him in dying well. But when exhorted to faith in the merits of St. Camillus, he besought his sisters to go to the sacred tomb and there commend him to the Saint. They set out on the journey; but before they arrived, the fever had left him and troubled him no more.

Francesca Garzi, reduced to a most dangerous state by dropsy, after having vainly tried the most effective remedies, fervently commended herself to St. Camillus, then applied his picture to her chest and swallowed a little mortar from his room. She had hardly done so, when she fell into a peaceful sleep, and on awaking felt herself completely cured, to the amazement of the physician, who left in writing a full attestation of the fact.

Giuseppe Cerasa suffered from an imposthume in his ear, from which such an abundance of injurious matter flowed into his throat that at length a tumor of the worst kind was formed, which the medical men had no hope of curing. By the persuasions of his wife, he sprinkled a little of the powdered plaster on the tumor, with lively faith, and earnestly commended himself to St. Camillus. In a short time the wonderful effects of his application and prayers were evident, for the dead flesh was consumed by little and little, the wound healed, and, to the amazement of all, he was free from even a shadow of the disease.

For four whole months Giovanni Ambroselli, a physician of Castel Nuovo di San Germano, had led a suffering life, in consequence of a malignant erysipelas, which had extended over all his limbs, so that from head to foot his whole body was one entire wound. Seeing himself in extremity and knowing that he could hope for no alleviation from human remedies, he had recourse to the protection of the Saint, and while invoking him was overcome by a gentle sleep, from which in a short time he awoke completely healed, for not the smallest cicatrix was perceptible on this great wound, besides which, his powers were so much invigorated that he himself could hardly credit the fact, for he seemed to have suffered no illness whatever.

In consequence of an epidemic Francesco Spalavieri was attacked by such severe malignant fever that, having tried all remedies in vain, he was reduced to the point of death. In this desperate condition the sick man confided in the intercession of St. Camillus and took a little of the miraculous dust from his room, when he instantly recovered from his hopeless state.

A baby, named Giovanni, accidentally fell, but the fall was not considered of any consequence, so that Elisa-

betta Francucci, who was present, lifted it up and laid it in the cradle, but its uneasiness and cries during the whole night showed but too clearly that the injury was greater than had been supposed. In fact, on the following day, a large swelling was discovered on its right side, arising from the dislocation of a bone. The mother's heart sank within her at the discovery; but full of faith she took a picture of St. Camillus and with it touched the side of her baby, when the bone immediately returned to its place, and all signs of the injury disappeared.

Gio. Battista Passalacqua was in danger of death, in consequence of a malignant fever of more than twenty days' standing; while in the hospital at Rome, he was exhorted by a priest to make a good death. His mother, in her extreme distress, went for comfort to the tomb of the Saint, and also with the hope of obtaining the recovery of her dying son. She prayed there with sighs and tears for some time, and on her return to the invalid, found him so much better that in a few days she was able to take him with her to return thanks to the Saint, his deliverer.

Francesca Soppi was seized by a most acute pain in the region of the heart, which made respiration difficult, so that for fifteen successive days neither she nor the servants who attended her could take any rest. She was at last inspired to have recourse to St. Camillus, and applying one of his pictures to the affected part, "I would," said she with full confidence, "that thou shouldst cure me, and if this disease proceeds from secreted blood, grant that I may quickly be relieved, for otherwise I feel that I must die:" saying this, she quietly fell asleep, and on awaking, threw up a large mass of congealed blood, all pain ceased, and to the amazement of the bystanders she was perfectly cured without any other remedy.

Antonia Caracciolo, after an attack of putrid fever, was liable to an obstinate pleurisy, which soon placed her in imminent danger. While interiorly tormented by the face of death, she remembered that her nephew, Clement, had been cured by St. Camillus of rheumatic fever and a suffocating catarrh. Animated by faith, she began with many prayers to entreat him to intercede for her cure also. She then took some of the miraculous plaster, and at the moment a large quantity of worms came from her, and she was restored to perfect health.

Agata Neceti, a girl of fourteen, attacked by acute malignant fever, was in imminent danger of death. While by the orders of her medical attendants she was preparing to receive the last sacraments, she took in faith a little of the powder from the room of St. Camillus and immediately, to the astonishment of the doctors and all the servants, was so much recovered that, had it not been for the blisters which had been applied to her a short time before, she would have been able to leave the house.

Don Alessio Rocchis, a priest of Olevano, was afflicted by a malignant tumor in the knee, which by degrees increased to such a size that it became as large as the thigh itself. The remedies used produced suppuration, and the matter discharged was so acrid that not only the flesh, but even the tendons which united the bone of the thigh to that of the leg were consumed, and the bones themselves decayed from the lower part of the femur to the upper part of the tibia. The professional attendants thought it best to keep the wound open for fear of inflammation, which was threatened in consequence of the great pain and fever which the patient suffered. In this deplorable condition the good priest with great fervor applied to St. Camillus and placed a little of the miraculous plaster on the wound. Having done this, the pain, fever, and every

other inconvenience not only ceased, but the wound completely closed, and the knee became so strong that he could walk with great ease, the doctors themselves being the most astonished at the cure, which they attested to be a stupendous miracle.

Anna Felici, having her arm swollen from a tumor, for a long time applied various remedies; but instead of deriving any advantage from them, she one day perceived that the limb was much discolored. Dreading mortification, she, with much faith and fervor, implored the aid of St. Camillus and applied to her arm some of the miraculous dust from his tomb. In less than a quarter of an hour it resumed its natural color, and in a short time the swelling disappeared, and the invalid was perfectly cured.

Sister Francesca Vittoria Morganti, a nun in Rome, in the monastery of St. Caterina della Rota, suffered martyrdom from the enlargement of an artery, in consequence of the constant palpitation and the spasm in the knee, with which the disease was connected. This was followed by a total contraction of the muscles, which made her incapable of any action, so that there was little hope of cure given her by the doctors, especially when she was attacked by low fever, which slowly consumed her. Full of confidence, she sought the intercession of St. Camillus, and while in the act of praying to him, she was overtaken by a tranquil sleep, in which she seemed to see the Saint, who, with great benignity, showed himself ready to grant the favor which had been asked. "I only ask," said she, "to be delivered from this impediment, which renders me incapable of satisfying my religious obligations." Saying this, she awoke and found herself perfectly cured, and so strong that she went joyfully into the choir, to the great astonishment of all the other nuns, nor was she ever after subject to the same maladies.

Notwithstanding her tender age, Flavia Orlandi, a little girl, suffered from a most loathsome gangrene of the mouth, which obliged the surgeon to extract three teeth and with them several pieces of the jaw-bone, corroded and decayed by the malignant nature of the humor. Her parents turned with humble prayers to St. Camillus, to implore the desired recovery of their child. They then gave the surgeon a little of the miraculous powder, to be applied to the mouth of the patient. It was applied on the 18th of January, 1736, and on the following day he found her perfectly well, with the parts so closed that no trace of the disease remained.

Maddalena Sapevollo, an old woman of sixty, suffered from severe spasms in the neck and acute pains in the head, and when attacked by them was sometimes kept awake for whole nights together. They troubled her especially from the beginning of December to the end of May, and with such injury to her health that, besides suffering from frequent fever, she had lost the sight of one eye. In the month of November, 1737, she was again so severely attacked that, being unable to stand, she turned to the Saint, invoking his aid with all possible fervor. After a short prayer she fell asleep, and having quietly slept for some hours, she found on awaking that all pain had ceased, nor was she ever after liable to it.

On the 29th of April, 1738, Luca Melchiorre received a charge of three balls in his leg, from the unintentional discharge of an arquebus. The wound occasioned most violent inflammation, and afterwards discharged a quantity of blood which could only be stanchèd by applying the image of St. Camillus. The wound, however, was stanchèd but for a short time, and then began to bleed afresh and more violently, so that the surgeons despaired of stopping it. Meanwhile, the patient had for many

months been lying in bed, suffering from the light ligation of the leg, weakened by constant loss of blood, and reduced to extremity. He never, however, lost his confidence in the Saint, but applied the same image to his leg, and in a very few days was completely cured.

For five months Margarita Napoleoni had been suffering from obstinate fever, which baffled every remedy and was thought to be incurable. She remembered that her brother had been relieved from a similar illness through the intercession of St. Camillus, and causing some water to be brought her, in which some of the miraculous powder had been infused, she drank it off, when the fever immediately disappeared, nor was she attacked by it ever after.

Maria di Giocopo Giovanogli was suffering from a similar fever, which had so greatly reduced her that, fortified by the last sacraments, she only waited to breathe her last. While she was in her agony, some pious people, moved by compassion, went to the tomb of St. Camillus, and there fervently praying, took a little of the mortar and carried it to the dying woman, who, having swallowed it, was completely free from fever.

Maria Domenica Gori, of Pistoja, dwelling in the hospital of Father Bussi, in Rome, was seized by various and most acute pains; to cure these she was carried to the hospital of St. Giacomo in Augusta, called degl' Incurabili, but instead of deriving any advantage she was seized by dropsy and fever, accompanied by a discharge of blood, so that in the month of February she was reduced to her last agony, and the usual objects of devotion were placed at the foot of her bed. A charitable person saw her in this state and caused her to drink some water with the miraculous mortar. No effect followed at the time; but soon after the invalid, feeling herself a little

roused from her mortal oppression, had again recourse to St. Camillus and caused his picture to be applied to her breast. At the same instant the dying woman arose and sat on her bed, being completely delivered from her illness, so that on the following Sunday she was taken by the most excellent Eleonora Buoncompagni, Princess of Piombino, to the church of the Maddalena, to return thanks to the Saint, her deliverer.

Maria Domenica returned to her hospital in perfect health and continued so till the following October, when she was again taken ill with a most violent fever, which in three days brought her to the point of death. No remedy could relieve her, nor even mitigate the violent pain in her heart, which caused her to break out into frantic cries. Nine pounds of blood had been taken from her in vain, and the medical men recommended the last sacraments. Being at length in her agony, the Fathers Servants of the Sick were called in to her assistance. Father Camillo de Romanis went, and seeing her in such a state, thought he could not find a more fitting opportunity of invoking the Saint for a second miracle in favor of the dying woman. He therefore gave her one of his pictures to kiss and caused her to swallow a little of the plaster so often mentioned. When, behold! the sick woman instantly raised from death to life and sat up in her bed, whence, in a few moments, she sprang exultingly, no trace of her illness remaining, so that she could go down stairs to meet the parish priest who had come to assist her in her last passage.

A youth, named Francesco Sandini, was troubled by a glandular swelling of the throat, and from the bad humor which extended over his body, there formed a malignant tumor under his ribs, which after much surgical treatment, was at last pronounced incurable, so that

about the end of the month of May, 1739, he was given over by the physicians. His mother, being obliged to leave Rome for some time, was extremely afflicted, and turning with great confidence to St. Camillus, with holy boldness said: "Cure him, for thou art able." The pious woman's sighs reached heaven, so that when she returned home on July 15th of the same year, she found her son all joyful and smiling, seated on his bed and saying: "Do you not know whose feast it is today? St. Camillus has cured me." He then arose perfectly well, and without needing crutches or any other support, he descended with his mother to the neighboring church of Monte Santo, to render thanks to the Most High for his recovered health.

Angelo Lapis, a silversmith, in the year 1740 received an accidental blow, which paralyzed all his limbs in such a manner that he could no longer use his arms in his trade. After a year's illness he sought the tomb of St. Camillus and with great faith anointed himself with the oil of a lamp which burned there, when he was immediately cured of the paralysis and could afterwards freely resume his work.

In the month of March, 1740, Anna Maria della Frezza was taken ill of fever and spasms, and was in imminent danger of death. Taking courage, she implored the aid of the Saint, and taking a little mortar from his sepulcher, applied his picture to the part affected, when the spasms and fever totally ceased.

In the month of August, in the same year, Antonia fell ill of continued fever, pains in the head, and faintings, which brought her near to death. She earnestly turned to St. Camillus and, with great confidence swallowed a little of the mortar. In an instant the fever, pain, and

fainting ceased, and she became perfectly well, which was the more wonderful as she was sixty-four years of age.

In the month of September of the same year, Antonia Buonfigli was taken prematurely in the pains of childbirth. In attempting to deliver her, the midwife perceived that the child was without fingers and already decomposed. Alarmed at the sight, she placed a little of the miraculous powder of St. Camillus on the woman's mouth. She was immediately delivered of the dead child and was perfectly well. Forty days after, she suffered from a discharge of blood which troubled her for three months, but by taking the powder again she obtained the favor of a perfect cure.

Don Giovanni Barscifar, a Spaniard forty-five years old, suffered intense pain in the left part of his chest, which extended to his side. The invalid suffered for eight days without finding any remedy, till having taken the miraculous powder in his mouth he was instantly cured, nor was he ever after troubled by a similar pain.

Santa, the wife of Valerio Bordoni, gave birth to a child in the month of April, 1740, and was on the next day attacked by a severe oppression on the chest; on the 19th day she was given over by the physicians and received the last sacraments. Our religious who attended her applied one of the bandages which St. Camillus had used for his wound. As the oppression, however, continued, they and all the bystanders renewed their prayers with greater faith, when at that very moment she evidently began to improve and in a short time was restored to perfect health.

In the year 1741 Salvatori Pagliarini was struggling with death in a violent malignant fever, from which the remedies applied did not relieve him. The picture of St. Camillus was presented to him by one of our priests; he

interiorly commended himself to the Saint, who in a short time appeared to him with a compassionate and loving countenance, and he thought he heard him repeat the words: "Be well," when the fever immediately ceased, and the dying man was well.

About the middle of June, in the year 1741, Maria Felice Pierangeli fell into a miserable state of frenzy, so that she could get neither rest nor sleep for more than two-and-twenty days. Many pounds of blood were taken from her, and she was made to swallow most powerful sedatives, but without any good effect. On the contrary, as the insanity had taken the form of dangerous mania, the people of the house thought of binding her and taking her to the lunatic hospital. However, in her attacks there were some lucid intervals; and in one of these she touched her head and breast with a picture of St. Camillus, entreating him with tears to deliver her from this dreadful affliction; she was answered by the event, for from that moment she was no longer furious, she regained her sleep, and continued gradually to improve, till she perfectly regained her senses and became capable of receiving the sacraments. She continued ever after in sound mind.

Martha Caparoni, forty-two years of age, was suddenly covered with a most disgusting leprosy; besides this, she had dislocated her arm by a fall from a staircase. In this lamentable state she confidently invoked the Saint, and, without any other remedy, her leprosy was in a few days removed and her arm perfectly restored.

Bernardino Vecchiani, a youth, was coming over the Via Flaminia in a cart loaded with stones, when he accidentally fell, and was crushed by the heavy wheel, which broke one of his shoulders, and opened a deep wound in his head, which laid the skull bare. He was carried home half dead and covered with blood, and the surgeon who

attended him thought the wound dangerous and most difficult of cure. His mother, therefore, full of faith in the Saint, applied one of his pictures to the bandages of the wound. From that time the patient began to sleep a little, and on the next day, to the astonishment of every one, was perfectly well, only lamenting that he must remain in bed till the return of the surgeon, who at first would not credit the fact when it was related to him, but was afterwards full of wonder, when, on unbinding the wounds, he with his own eyes saw that in a few hours the bones had been reunited, and the wound healed, and that the youth was perfectly cured.

In the month of June, 1741, Antonio Crescentini bought a quantity of corrosive sublimate, as medicine for his horses, and brought it home without the knowledge of his servants, putting it away in a paper. His wife, Anna, in his absence wished to make some pastry for her family. She, therefore, provided some sugar, and put it in the place where the sublimate was. When the hour for using it came, she by mistake took the paper of poison instead of the sugar. She sprinkled it over the pastry and began to eat, together with her two sons and another woman named Angela Testa. Hardly, however, had they taken a few mouthfuls, when they were attacked by a burning sensation in the mouth, with violent contortions, pain, and vomiting. In this state they all had recourse to St. Camillus, and took a little of the miraculous mortar, steeped in wine, when the vomiting and pain instantly ceased, and they all recovered without feeling any remains of illness. Antonio returned, and on hearing of the accident perceived the change which his wife had made, so that it came to light that they had all swallowed deadly poison, and that by a most evident miracle they had all been preserved. They then went with humble

acknowledgments to the altar of the Saint, to return due thanks for this signal prodigy.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

Some Particular Circumstances Which Occurred Previous to the Canonization of St. Camillus, and of Other Favors and Miracles Wrought after His Beatification

We should first remark that, no sooner had the glad tidings, that the decree of approbation of the Saint's virtues and miracles had been published at Rome by the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XIV reached Bocchianico, the fortunate birthplace of St. Camillus, than the religious of our house there, overpowered with joy at this most consolatory news, thought that as the canonization of their saintly founder was at hand, it was necessary to increase the splendor of their oratory, once the stable in which he was born.

In this oratory there was a picture above the altar, representing the Saint kneeling in an attitude of supplication before a crucifix, but through age and the dampness of the place it had been so much injured that the figure could no longer be distinguished, besides which, it had been torn in many parts, so that they resolved to have a new one. For this purpose they went to the oratory that they might decide on what should be done on the spot itself. But on opening the door, they were filled with astonishment and holy awe, for on looking at the picture they beheld it entire, bright, and as perfect as though it had been freshly painted; they also perceived some variation in the position of the figure, for St. Camillus no longer had his hands joined in the attitude of

prayer, but held them on his breast as if in thanksgiving.

Seeing this, they immediately despatched two messengers to the neighboring city of Chieti, to inform His Grace the Archbishop, who immediately sent his vicar-general. The latter, having ascertained the truth of the prodigy, ordered the doors of the oratory to be closed and sealed with the episcopal seal, till the Archbishop should come in person, which he soon did. On his arrival, when the doors were reopened, he also was an eyewitness and admirer of this portentous fact.

The veneration in which this place was consequently held is indescribable, people came in crowds from all parts through the fame of the prodigy, and numberless invalids were cured on visiting the place. Besides many persons, not of the lower class, but of high ecclesiastical and secular rank, deposed solemnly that they had seen the picture of the Saint move its eyes, bend its fingers, and perform similar marvelous movements. This brief account must suffice, as all know the veneration in which, even in our days, that oratory in which our Father was so wondrously born has ever been held, and it is regarded as one of the most celebrated sanctuaries in the Abruzzi.

The ceremonies of our great Father's beatification were celebrated with more than usual pomp in the Vatican Basilica on the 8th of April, 1742, from which day the devotion of the faithful to so admirable a saint so increased that from the frequency with which he was invoked, he became the common advocate, especially in the case of women in childbirth and of dying persons, and all who were oppressed by sickness or suffering from misfortunes addressed their vows to him for protection and cure; so that the same Supreme Pontiff Benedict XIV, seeing that the Omnipotent One continued to glorify him by new and portentous favors, was pleased to order

juridical processes of his recent miracles to be made, that the cause might be promoted for the accomplishment of the solemn canonization. Three miracles were submitted to the rigid examen, as nine had been proposed antecedently to his beatification; and as two of the former were solemnly approved, so of the latter three, after their having been collected in the authentic form, and so proposed to the Congregation of Rites, and well discussed in the Antepreparatory, Preparatory and General Congregations, two at last received from the oracle of the Vatican that incontrovertible approbation which may be seen in the apostolical decrees.

As in the following chapter we intend to give at length the four miracles which were approved, two for the beatification and two for the canonization of our Saint, which was celebrated with wonderful celerity, only four years after his beatification, we shall here mention only a part of the miracles and favors obtained by the faithful through his intercession, from that hour when he was first venerated under the title of Blessed; regretting, however, that for brevity's sake we must pass over an all but endless number, which doubtless would deserve to be recounted for the greater glory of God, who vouchsafed to honor His servant in so singular a manner. These four, however, are selected for the reader's satisfaction.

After the smallpox, Girolamo Baldini of Caprarola was for two years affected by a continual flow of tears from his right eye. His father, Bartolomeo, a surgeon by profession, left no means untried for his relief which art could suggest. In fact, he did succeed in drying up the humor, but the result was a sad one, for after a few days the part swelled again and discharged a thick and purulent matter, which alarmed him so much that for a long time he gave up the cure as hopeless; meanwhile, in

consequence of the acrid humor, the child lost the sight of that eye, and his face was so much disfigured as to excite horror in all who looked on it. In this state he passed another two years, till Bartolomeo, urged by his wife, reluctantly attempted the cure again, but with no better success than before. He stopped the discharge, but a new tumor formed under the eye, of about the size of half a nut. This tumor broke of itself and discharged matter in great abundance, and as this yielded to no remedy, it at last became a callous fistula; and as the bone under it putrefied, it occasioned fever and inflammation. The father then knew that fire and the knife would alone avail; but while Bartolomeo was nerving himself for this last trial, the mother, whose heart shrank from the thought of her young son's being subjected to this operation, had recourse to St. Camillus about the end of May, 1742, and told her son, then nine years of age, to do the same, laying on the affected eye a packet containing the miraculous mortar from the room of the Saint. She did this at ten o'clock at night, and at the return of day he was perfectly cured. The humors dried up, the flesh was restored, the fistula closed, and not a vestige of the malady remained.

Ottavia Ubaldini, thirty years of age, began to suffer from dropsy; at first she took no notice of it, till at last it became so burdensome as to render her incapable of motion, subjected her to a severe inflammation and daily attacks of fever and breathlessness, to fearful tension of the abdomen, and confined her entirely to her bed. She then had recourse to the help of physicians who un-animously declared that their remedies would hardly relieve her from her sufferings, and, in fact, after eighteen days she was reduced to extremity.

In the month of May, 1742, the time for celebrating the beatification of St. Camillus, by a triduum in the church of the Maddalena, was at hand. The relatives of the invalid with great faith commended her to the new Beato and caused her to swallow a little of the miraculous dust from his tomb. They instantly witnessed a stupendous miracle. She raised herself as from a deep sleep, her forces revived, her limbs were invigorated, the swelling of her body disappeared, the fever vanished, and in a moment she was cured of an inveterate disease, which after many years had at last all but consigned her to the arms of death. At the same time she wished to spring out of bed, but the attendants would not permit her to do so till the arrival of the physicians.

Among other witnesses of this miracle were two most exemplary priests, and on the following morning the physician, having pronounced the cure to be miraculous, drew up a full attestation of it and desired that information of the fact should be given to our religious for the greater glory of the Saint.

In the month of May, 1742, Sister Maria Alba di San Pietro, a professed nun in Rome, in the monastery of the Convertite in the Corso, was tormented for twenty days by a most painful spasm which made her immovable, as she could find no posture which did not occasion intolerable pain. Meanwhile the fame of the continual prodigies which the Blessed Camillus obtained for the faithful by his intercession was published throughout Rome. To him, then, the sick woman turned, with all compunction, full of faith in his kind help. She did not pray in vain. She kissed the image of the beatified one, and in doing so was instantaneously cured of all oppression, to the mutual surprise of herself and the other

nuns, who could not sufficiently extol the powerful intercessor.

Sister Maria Teresa Gabrielli, a professed nun in the same monastery, suffered severe spasms from a tumor under the right arm, and finding no relief from the remedies suggested by human skill, with lively faith sprinkled a little of the powder of St. Camillus on the affected part, when the spasm immediately ceased, and the tumor disappeared.

Margarita Patti was for a long time troubled by intense pain, which caused her to scream, to the great annoyance of all the neighbors, and as a remedy took a little of the powder of St. Camillus, recommending herself to him in lively faith. She never after suffered from these pains, but remained perfectly tranquil.

In the month of June, 1742, Maria Fornasari was seized by a violent fever, accompanied by severe pains in the head and back, and after having tried various remedies and bleedings, was declared to be incurable by the physicians of the hospital of the Maddalena in Bologna, in which she was standing, and was in imminent danger of death. In her sufferings she called for a pious lady, who, dressed in a religious habit, with a cross on her breast, exercised charity towards the sick, and induced her to give her a blessing with a picture of St. Camillus. No sooner did the picture touch the head of the dying person, than the fever fled, every symptom disappeared, and the invalid sprang quickly from the bed and would immediately have left the hospital, had not the pious lady persuaded her to wait till the coming morning, that the miracle might be acknowledged by the physicians.

In Bologna also at the beginning of September, in the same year, Angela Fabri was taken ill with a malignant fever, which in a few days brought her to such a

state that the doctors and the parish priest thought she could survive but a few hours. They therefore fortified her by Extreme Unction, and she was already in her agony, when a good neighbor ran in with a paper of the miraculous mortar of St. Camillus, and together with the poor woman's husband recited some Pater Nosters, and then with great difficulty, so closely were her teeth clenched, made her swallow some of the powder. After this, the husband lay down on a box to take a little rest, but hardly had he fallen asleep, when he was awakened by his wife, who, seated on the bed, called to him aloud, saying: "I am no longer ill, I am cured."

The good man at first thought that this was delirium, but he was soon set free from this mistake, for the invalid arose from her bed and gave such proofs of recovered strength and health as to leave no doubt of the miracle. She afterwards slept tranquilly, and on the following morning returned to her usual occupations, to the astonishment of the doctor and the priest, who had seen her in a dying state the day before.

In the parish church of St. Isaias, in the same city of Bologna, Domenica Vigi, a sexagenarian, was afflicted by three diseases, fever, volvulus, and strangury, and endured intolerable tortures from the close of December, 1742, till the 16th of March in the following year. As she was then more severely attacked, she was fortified by the sacraments, and prepared herself for death. A little of the miraculous plaster of St. Camillus was then brought to her, which, being taken in great faith, cured her in less than half an hour, so that on that very day she was able to go out and resume her occupations.

A foreign priest had, in trust, placed a considerable sum of money in the hand of a merchant without taking due security, and when he desired to draw it out, met

with an insulting refusal, with threats against his life should he ever again attempt to assert his claim. The unfortunate priest was all but in despair, but happily remembering the favors daily received by the faithful through the intercession of St. Camillus, he turned to him, promising that should he grant him the favor, he would present a silver offering at his altar. His prayers were heard, for the next day the heart of the merchant was wonderfully changed, and he promptly returned the money.

Margarita Tosani of Rome was taken ill at the age of seventy with strangury, which, as it daily increased in spite of every remedy, caused her at last to be given over by the physicians. Her husband, however, commended her to St. Camillus, and, giving her a little of the wondrous powder, saw her at the same moment miraculously restored.

Girolamo Conferrandi suffered from the like most painful disease, with the addition of putrid fever and two severe swellings, and so frightful was the illness that, having received the sacraments, he had called in two of our religious to assist him in making a happy death. They placed a picture of St. Camillus on his breast, after which he quietly fell asleep, and in his sleep it seemed as though the picture was gently touching the two malignant tumors. Indeed, he found himself much better on awaking, and in a few days rose from his bed entirely cured.

Maria Anna Origo, a Roman lady of rank, had for four months suffered from erysipelas, which beginning at one ear extended over the face and neck with most acute pain and swelling. No remedy could either remove or even mitigate the illness, so that the physicians having given up the cure, the invalid turned to St. Camillus, entreat-

ing her friends to have the sign of the cross made over her with his relic; this was done on the evening of January 10, 1742, and on the following morning the swelling disappeared, the pain ceased, and the illness was at an end.

Maria Zuaynoni, of the parish of San Lorenzo in Bologna, had been compelled to keep her bed for three years, from a complication of disorders, and besides suffering from severe pains, fever, convulsions, and other symptoms, she was unable to take sufficient nourishment, in consequence of her extreme disgust for all kinds of food. The physicians, baffled by the obstinate and manifold diseases, at length declared the case to be desperate. But heavenly medicine effected what was beyond human art, for the invalid having been blessed with a relic of St. Camillus, on the 2d of April, 1743, was miraculously cured on that very day.

More marvelous yet was the cure of Santa Tordini, also a Bolognese, of the parish of St. Isaias, who had attained the decrepit age of eighty. In May, 1743, she was attacked by asthma, which, at the end of a month, reduced her to extremity. Being abandoned by the medical attendants, fortified by the sacraments, she fell into her agony, oppressed by catarrh and breathlessness.

Our religious were called in to her assistance and to give her the benediction in *articulo mortis*. They came, and before doing anything further, they signed her with the relic of St. Camillus. The old woman was at once changed from death to life, and after a few moments, rising from her bed, she went the same evening to occupy another house in the neighborhood, which had been hired by her relatives.

A thorn having accidentally pierced the hand of Felice Rasponi, of the Conservatory of the Ripetta in Rome, the poor creature suffered for the space of three

months severe and constant pain, without finding any means of extracting it. At length, being afraid of losing her finger, she fervently invoked St. Camillus, and in the very act of doing so saw the thorn come out of itself, and the wound close immediately.

Angela Sandani, being pregnant, was seized by a malignant fever, but in consequence of her pregnancy, the doctors could use no remedy, and her death seemed inevitable. However, her relatives anointed her with some oil from the lamp which burns before the tomb of St. Camillus and touched her with his picture, and this sufficed for her complete cure in a few days.

Angela Barberi, of Messina, being tormented by spasmodic pains in her left arm, was so much exhausted and so unable to take either food or sleep that the doctors had great fears for her life. She had faith in St. Camillus, and applying his picture to her arm was cured directly.

Beatrice Balisteri, of the same city, was in a few days reduced to extremity by a malignant fever, so that the doctors ordered her to receive the sacraments, and as fatal symptoms increased, our religious were called in to assist her in her last passage. One of them ran to her, and awakening her confidence in St. Camillus, blessed her with his picture. On this benediction she quietly fell asleep, and on the following morning she was found by the physicians to be in perfect health. Giovanna Astoreti, through a most violent convulsion of the bowels, was rapidly drawing near her end, but no sooner had she with devout confidence applied a picture of St. Camillus to her chest, than the terrible convulsion ceased, and she was free from all disease.

In the month of August, 1743, Caterina Franceschi, a pensioner in the hospice of St. Michele a Ripa, contracted a dreadful scorbutic infection. She caused a skilful sur-

geon to examine her, who declared the disease to be incurable. In the meantime the virulent humor was creeping over her whole body, and it produced such fearful ulceration of the throat that for six whole days she could not get a moment's rest nor any sleep whatever. One of her companions lent her a picture of St. Camillus and encouraged her to confide in his patronage. The poor creature invoked him and made vows to him with great faith. After this she slept quietly during the whole night, and on awaking found that the inflammation had disappeared, as well as the ulcers, and she no longer suffered any pain.

Francesca Baldossari broke her shoulder in a fall, and for some days committed herself to the care of a surgeon, but afterwards doubting whether his treatment would succeed, she applied the picture of St. Camillus to the shoulder under a divine impulse, and in the very act the bone was miraculously set and needed no other cure.

In the year 1743 Giovanni Gragiori, of Rome, was by an apoplectic seizure suddenly deprived of speech and motion, so that he appeared to be a corpse, with the exception of a malignant catarrh, which attacked his throat and by its violence threatened him with immediate suffocation. The frightened servants brought him in the miraculous powder of St. Camillus, which he had hardly swallowed in a gasping manner, when he recovered his senses and was so quickly freed from the apoplexy that it could be hardly known that he had been attacked by it.

Maria Faeri, sixty-six years of age, in severe fever and intense pains had been given over by the physicians. She did not, however, lose courage, but firm even at that moment in her confidence in St. Camillus, she took a little of the miraculous powder, and applying his picture to her body was instantly free from pain and fever.

Anna Morelli, residing on the ascent del Grillo in Rome, had, in the course of ten years, exhausted the skill and resources of three physicians, her disease being a dropsy, which at last was pronounced incurable, in the year 1749. In this state she cast herself with all confidence into the compassionate arms of St. Camillus, and taking the powder found that the swelling disappeared insensibly without any crisis, and at the end of three days her body was restored to its natural state.

Giovanna Morelli, her daughter, lived for a long time in the dread of suffocation from aneurism, which greatly afflicted her. At last, in the month of August, 1743, a serious discharge of blood and violent fever were added to her sufferings, which reduced her to such extremity that, being fortified by the sacraments and by the assistance of the priests, nothing remained for her but to breathe her last.

Her sister, who had implored the assistance of St. Camillus from the beginning of the illness, seeing her in so desperate a state, made a vow to the Saint, that if he would grant the favor, she would say a novena to him and keep a lamp burning before his picture for nine days; and without delay she ran to light it, when, wonderful to relate, she had hardly done so, before the dying Giovanna aroused from the lethargy in which she was lying sat up in bed, asked for some food, and to the utter amazement of all around her, was found to be perfectly cured.

The most Rev. Father Isidoro Frusi, abbot of the venerable monastery of St. Bernardo alle Terme Diocleziane, suffered from extreme oppression of the breath, caused by fever, inflammation of the chest, and the violent attacks of convulsive asthma, which prevented his taking any rest and obliged him to sit with his head supported on

a little table. Instead of his deriving relief from the remedies used, the illness continued to increase, until at last it turned to dropsy.

The most Rev. Father Valentino Valentini, general of the order, seeing him in this miserable state, and hearing from the physicians that he had but four or five days to live, placed all his hopes in the intercession of St. Camillus and administered to him the dust from his apartment. The invalid having received it, and having had a picture of the Saint applied to his forehead, bound himself by vow to fast every day during his whole life on the vigil of the Saint's feast, should he obtain his cure, and also to celebrate a yearly Mass at his altar on that day. Having made the vow, he immediately felt relieved and was in a few days restored to perfect health.

Margarita Battaglini suffered from a large wound, which had opened in her leg, which, after having been unsuccessfully treated for a long time, gave her a daily increasing pain, so that she resolved on having recourse to St. Camillus, hoping that as the Saint had suffered from a similar wound, he would be moved with compassion and cure her. She then unbound the bandages, threw away the ointments, and sprinkled a little of the miraculous mortar on the wound, saying with faith: "O blessed Saint, it is for thee to cure me;" and in fact, in twenty-four hours the wound closed, and no vestige remained of that malady which had so long caused her to endure intolerable torture.

Margarita Sanzoni, who was near her confinement, suffered excruciating pain from strangury which lasted four days. She had most careful medical attendance, but skill was unavailing, and the professional men were com-

pelled by hard necessity to give her over. The invalid heard their sad decision with great alarm, but did not lose her confidence in St. Camillus. She procured a bandage which the Saint had worn about his leg, and placed it on her body, when a large discharge of water instantly followed, and she was completely cured.

Not long after she was happily delivered of two infants, who were supposed to be dead. The grief of the mother, when the death of the children was announced to her, was very great, and turning with tears to St. Camillus, she besought of him to obtain for her twins at least as much of life as might enable them to receive holy baptism. Her sighs were heard, the infants began to breathe, and were washed in the saving waters, surviving their baptism for some days.

Rosa Carletti of Rome, after a bad confinement, suffered pain and delirium for eight days, without finding any relief from medical skill. Raising her eyes to heaven, she with lively faith invoked the aid of St. Camillus, after which she swallowed some of the miraculous mortar and was instantly free from all suffering.

Anna Simanetti, also of Rome, was troubled for the space of eight years by continual pain, which deprived her of rest even at night. Every remedy was employed, but in vain; at length her body was anointed with oil from the lamp which burns at the tomb of St. Camillus, and from that moment she felt no more pain.

Michele Morelli, a painter in Rome, was seized with fever and severe inflammation of the chest. After trying many ineffectual remedies the physicians gave him over. As a resigned Christian he desired to be fortified by the sacraments and expected death every moment. Meanwhile a devout person brought him a picture of St. Camillus, which was applied to his head on the evening of the

10th of November, 1743, and on the following morning the medical attendants found him free from fever and perfectly cured.

Benedetto Pirini was attacked by an obstinate quartan fever, which, resisting many remedies, insensibly consumed him and reduced him so much that he could no longer stand. At the entreaty of his servants, he with lively faith took a little of the marvelous powder of St. Camillus, when the fever immediately went off and returned no more to distress him.

Anna Placidi, of Frascati, had for seven days suffered from continual fever, and when her recovery was expected, was attacked by low hectic fever, which in a few months reduced her to extremity; but having procured some of the powder of St. Camillus, she took it in a glass of water and instantly felt herself free from fever and so much invigorated as to be able to attend to her employment.

Giovanni Gattarelli, a soldier of the Pope, in the Corsican Battalion, was in garrison in a quarter of La Macchia, called della Fajuola, and having one day, together with his comrades, attacked the banditti who were in that district, was struck in many places by the shot from their arquebuses, but suffered no further injury than the perforation of his clothes, through the especial favor of St. Camillus, to whom he was devoted, and whose sacred picture he wore about him.

Anna Casanova was dying of rheumatism, accompanied by convulsions in all parts of her body; she ardently invoked the aid of St. Camillus, and in twenty-four hours recovered from that deplorable condition and was completely cured.

Francesca Docilli, who had for many years been blind in both eyes, hearing the universal fame of the many

miracles wrought at the tomb of St. Camillus, felt a lively faith enkindled within her, and causing herself to be led to the tomb, had a little of the oil given her from the lamp, and after anointing herself with it for a few days had her sight perfectly restored.

Gaetano Liberti had for a long time suffered from calculi, which once occasioned strangury for ten days, which, besides giving him excruciating pain, brought him to the point of death, so that the physicians, after an ineffectual trial of every possible remedy, had intimated to him the necessity of fortifying himself by the last sacraments. He wished to try the efficacy of the powder of St. Camillus, and taking it with great faith, immediately passed a large stone and a great quantity of water, and no longer suffered from that most painful malady to which he had been frequently liable.

Virginia Torani had erysipelas in her leg, which being incurable by medical skill, at last broke and threatened gangrene. She then fervently invoked the aid of St. Camillus, touched the diseased leg with his sacred picture, and sprinkled some of the powdered plaster from his room on the wound, which unexpectedly closed, and to her great delight was perfectly healed.

An unhealthy excrescence had blinded one of the eyes of the boy Girolamo Jacomini, which could not be reduced by any remedy. The mother moistened a little of the miraculous plaster of St. Camillus in water, and one evening applied it with lively confidence to the closed eye of her son, and saw on the following morning to her astonishment, that the excrescence was totally removed, and the boy's eye was limpid and clear.

Santa Sciaup, a little girl in Rome about eleven years of age, had her head covered by a putrid sore, which, for more than a year, baffled ointments and every other rem-

edy. At last, by the advice of some devout persons, she began in the month of February, 1744, a novena in honor of St. Camillus, touching her head daily with the picture of the Saint and anointing it with the oil from his lamp. At the first touch and anointing the disease abated, and continued gradually to diminish, till on the last day of the novena her head was entirely clean.

Teresa Davani, of Rome, was born with her left leg shorter than the other, and for fourteen years went halting, to her great distress; besides which, the efforts which she used in walking had caused an extreme relaxation, which obliged her to use a strong bandage. The poor girl passed a most comfortless life, when one of her uncles, touched by compassion, procured for her the powder and the picture of St. Camillus, with the prodigious effects of which he was well acquainted, from having been employed in a process of his miracles formed in Marino.

The young girl received this gift with great gladness, and on the 15th of January, 1744, began in her own house a novena in honor of the Saint. On the second day she was cured of all relaxation, so as to be able to throw away the now useless bandage. On the third day she repeated her prayers with greater fervor, saying: "O my Saint, I desire this further favor, that thou wouldst make my leg of equal length with the other." At this moment the left leg extended to the length of the right, amidst the acclamations and joy of the whole family, who saw her walking upright and agile, without further need of a stick or any other support.

On the 8th of August, 1744, Maria Francesca Giusti, an infant of seventeen months, swallowed a bone about two inches in length and half an inch in breadth, and as this could not pass her throat, she was in danger of suffocation. The parents seeing their little daughter in this

deplorable state, mourned over her as lost, and not knowing how to aid her, they took a picture of St. Camillus, and fervently invoking him, applied it to her throat. Immediately the little creature, who was almost expiring, put her hand into her mouth, and without any effort drew out the fatal bone with her tiny fingers. The amazement and joy of her parents at this prodigy may be imagined. They carried her to the altar of the Saint, where, after rendering due thanks, they left a votive offering.

In the venerable monastery of San Francesco in Perugia, Margarita Antinori, a girl of rank, was attacked by hysterical affections, and was liable to continual vomitings, so that she was unable to retain any kind of food. The physicians used every means for her cure, but in vain, and she became wan and emaciated, and so weak that on the 26th of August, 1744, the physicians, finding that she had no pulse, hastily ordered the holy oil.

The confessor of the monastery came, and besides this sacrament, seeing that she was dying, commended her soul and remained in the monastery that night to assist her in her last passage. Meanwhile the bishop of the city sent her a relic, a picture, and the powder of St. Camillus. The priest applied the picture to the chest of the dying girl and signed her with the relic, when Margarita suddenly opened her eyes and began to breathe more freely, perfectly regaining her senses. At five o'clock, notwithstanding her difficulty of swallowing, she took some of the powder mixed in water, and had hardly done so, when she recovered her speech. She then slept quietly till morning and awoke in perfect health, so that she was able to rise from her bed and go about the monastery as though nothing had been the matter with her.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

The Four Miracles Approved for the Beatification and Canonization of St. Camillus

Although, as we have seen, the marvelous favors wrought by God through the intercession of St. Camillus, after his happy passage, were very numerous, and a large number of these were attested in regular processes, made as well in Rome as elsewhere, by the ordinaries of the different places, so that no reasonable doubt can be entertained of their authenticity; still, in compliance with the decrees of Urban VIII and the Pontiffs his successors, only nine were submitted to the rigorous examen of the holy Congregation of Rites, selected from those which were found by the processes to have most exactly fulfilled the conditions required by the same decrees. Of these nine two obtained the solemn approbation of the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XIV, in his decree of November 13, 1741.

The first took place in the person of Caterina Maceroni, a girl eleven years old. A fleshy polypus formed in her nostrils, which drew a malignant humor to the parts, so that her face was enormously swollen and disfigured. Fever subsequently came on, which was followed by spasms and at last by gangrene. The surgeons used every means for the removal of so horrible a disease, not omitting violent remedies, amongst which fire was included, but far from succeeding, the illness increased fearfully. The wound caused by the fire became a fetid ulcer and began to discharge a contagious matter, which, besides having corrupted the bone of the nose, rendered further treatment impracticable, on account of its excessively bad

effluvia. The girl was a pupil in the monastery of St. Caterina in Viterbo, and was obliged to be separated from the rest of the pupils, to her extreme discouragement and distress, and her trial was greatly aggravated on account of this separation and of being thus avoided by her companions.

Happily for her, she was placed under the care of a nun who was very devout to St. Camillus. She exhorted her to have confidence in the powerful intercession of this great servant of God, of whom new and famous prodigies were daily reported, and after having implored his aid with Margarita, she applied two threads of the Saint's shirt to the gangrened part. At this moment the girl ceased to feel any pain and suddenly fell into a quiet sleep, which lasted through the whole night.

On her awaking the following morning, there remained no trace either of the swelling, the fleshy excrescence, or the gangrene, but all the diseased parts had returned to a healthy state; so that when the surgeons came, astonished, and beyond measure stupefied at this wonder, they gave authentic attestation of this evident miracle, which was subsequently confirmed in the processes by the juridical testimony of all the nuns, who had seen her on the previous day in the state described, and found her perfectly well on the following morning. This prodigy happened at the end of November, 1728, and was, as we have said, the first to receive the pontifical approbation.

The second miracle approved for the beatification of St. Camillus was that performed in the month of January, 1728, in the case of Caterina Dondoli Ferrante of Rome. In the sixth month of her pregnancy she was attacked by malignant fever with sharp pains and inflammation of the lungs, all mortal diseases in their charac-

ter, and so much the more dangerous as they were attended by incessant delirium, ulceration of the throat, and extreme difficulty of breathing in consequence of a suffocating catarrh. Four physicians labored with all their skill to cure her, but the obstinate diseases would not yield to the most approved remedies; so that being unable even to deliver her of the child, which every symptom showed to be dead, they gave her over. She then received the most holy sacraments, and the curate of Santa Maria del Popolo, having administered the holy oil, stood near her bed to recommend her soul in its last passage.

At this moment one of her young female friends, urged by a supernatural impulse, besought the priest to apply to her the relics of some Saint, through whose merits she might implore a miracle from God in favor of the dying woman. Having heard her pious request, he drew from his pocket a paper containing some of the powdered plaster from the apartment of St. Camillus, and caused the dying person to swallow it in a spoonful of broth, praying with the young woman that the Lord would vouchsafe to glorify his Saint by performing this stupendous miracle through his intercession; when, marvelous to relate, the sufferer had hardly swallowed the powder, than she regained her vital powers and spirits, and of her own accord sat up in the bed, and then confidently invoking St. Camillus, she rose freely from that bed without fever, spasms, ulceration of the throat, or any trace of her complicated maladies; so that she was immediately able to apply herself to her laborious household duties.

When the time of her confinement arrived, she was happily delivered of a living and healthy child, to whom, out of gratitude, the name of Camillus was given.

The fame of so many prodigies daily wrought by the intercession of Blessed Camillus, and the continual petitions presented from all parts, that his cause might be completed, and he might be soon honored with the title of Saint by a solemn decree from the Vatican, induced the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XIV, who was already much devoted to St. Camillus, having before vigorously examined his cause in his office of Promoter of the Faith, to expedite the decree for resuming the cause itself, as well as another for the examination of the miracles wrought subsequently to his beatification. A great number were speedily presented in the processes, three of which were admitted by the sacred congregation for strict examination; and of these, two were solemnly approved by the same Sovereign Pontiff, as appears from the decree of May 1, 1745.

The first of the approved miracles occurred in the district of Caprarola. A little girl, Lucia Teresa Petti, had from her very birth been affected with asthma, so that she took the milk with great difficulty of breathing and danger of suffocation. The illness increased with her age, so that she could not lie down on the bed. A great prominence appeared, she went up and down the stairs with extreme difficulty, and felt the same in eating and drinking, being too weak to engage in any domestic occupation.

To this complication of maladies was added most painful contraction of the chest and throat, thick speech, intense pain in the sides, corrupted expectoration mingled with blood, and a torturing sensation in the abdomen, which caused the poor creature to suffer as from so many strikes of a hammer. These heavy sufferings often brought her to the gates of death. The remedies which were used in great quantity and variety by the medical attendants,

far from relieving, constantly aggravated, her malady, so that it was finally declared to be incurable.

In the month of June, 1742, the unusual severity of the attacks placed her in imminent danger, when Camilla Baldini, whose son had a few days before been miraculously and instantaneously cured of fistula in the right eye through the intercession of Blessed Camillus, earnestly besought her to commend herself with all confidence to the charity of this powerful intercessor. The invalid freely consented to do this, and invoking St. Camillus with extreme fervor, took a little of the miraculous plaster of his room, when her sufferings from asthma instantly ceased. She then applied his sacred picture to her chest, when she was enabled to lie down on her bed with ease and to enjoy uninterrupted sleep till a very late hour the next morning when she rose without assistance, and to the surprise both of the household and of the doctors, was found to be perfectly well, no longer bent, but straight and nimble, no longer bound, but free, and fit for any labor, of which she gave immediate proof by sweeping the house with the greatest ease and agility.

The physicians in their juridical attestation declared this cure to be naturally impossible, and unanimously ascribed it to the Omnipotence of God, who thus wished to manifest the glory of His faithful servant St. Camillus.

The city of Marino was destined to behold the second prodigy which deserved to be authenticated by a solemn decree of the Apostolic See for the canonization of St. Camillus. This was the instantaneous cure of Margherita Castelli of the same city. Even before her birth her blood had become infected, so that at the age of two months little pustules of corrupted matter appeared on her body, which resisted every means used for their removal, and after various consultations were thought by

medical men to be incurable; so that by their advice all medicine was given up, as it could only increase her sufferings and accelerate death. The poor girl's illness was therefore habitual, and kept her always emaciated, wan, and weak until the eighteenth year of her age. At that time the malignity of the humor which caused the disease increased, and extending to her neck and face, became in a short time so universal that from head to foot the body of the poor creature was one putrid, bloody, and encrusted wound emitting an intolerable stench.

At the end of July, 1743, she was seized by symptoms of raging fever, which indicated inflammation and brought on delirium, filling her whole system with pain and causing such contraction that, being unable to move herself, she was compelled to remain helpless in her bed, and to receive no food but what was put into her mouth by others. The physician who visited her when in this state thought after long observation that the disease had reached the vital parts, and fearing that death might be imminent, wished her to receive the sacraments.

At that time there was a great suspicion of plague. The doctor therefore warned all the household not to touch the diseased body, and he himself discontinued his visits. The wretched Margherita being therefore abandoned by the physician, having received the sacraments, and been recommended by the priest, drew near her end, and was no longer able to take nourishment, having completely lost her sight and hearing and almost the power of utterance.

Her relatives bewailed her as one dead, and that she might not lose the consolation of receiving the last embrace of a sister, named Caterina, residing in Rome, they made her return to Marino by water, while they meanwhile made the necessary preparations for the funeral.

This coming of Caterina was truly an inspiration of God, for she brought with her a picture of St. Camillus, and encouraging all the family, she immediately applied it to her dying sister's breast, exhorting her with a loud voice to have confidence in this marvelous *Beato*. She then fell on her knees, and together with her mother recited a Pater, Ave, and Gloria in his honor, when, O wonder! at the first sound of the Gloria Patri, Margherita in a sonorous voice exclaimed: "I am cured; Blessed Camillus has granted the favor!" and immediately got out of bed without support; she who a little before had required many persons even to turn her on one side, and having left the corrupt incrustation on the sheets, in less than two hours her flesh appeared fresh, supple, and entirely cleansed.

Her relatives then exchanged their tears of sorrow for those of tenderness and joy; the news quickly spread through Marino and the adjacent country, and in the juridical process, besides the testimony of the physicians, there concurred that of very many persons and even priests, who deposed on oath that they had seen her in the state above described and then suddenly and perfectly cured.

These prodigies, and the common desire not only of Rome, but also of many distinguished bishops and illustrious princes, both in and out of Italy, as well as the repeated supplications already forwarded to the Holy See from the Catholic kings, Philip III and Philip IV, and more recently from Charles, King of the Two Sicilies, and his illustrious consort, Maria Amelia, induced the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XIV, of eternal memory, to issue a decree for the canonization of St. Camillus, with unexampled dispatch, as not quite four years had elapsed since his beatification. This decree was promulgated on the 17th of August, 1745, the anniversary of the exalta-

tion of that immortal Pontiff to the chair of St. Peter; and at length, on that most solemn day for Rome, the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, in the following year, 1746, the solemn canonization was celebrated in the Vatican Basilica, with unusual pomp amidst the applause of innumerable persons who had assembled from all parts of the Catholic world; while by the same Sovereign Pontiff, according to the ritual for this ceremony, was celebrated the Pontifical Mass, in honor of the new Saint, besides that of St. Fidelis of Sigmaringen, martyr; St. Peter Regalato, of the Minors Observant; St. Joseph of Leonessa, Capuchin, both confessors; and St. Catherine of Ricci, Virgin of the order of St. Dominic; all of whom were solemnly canonized on the same day with our glorious founder St. Camillus of Lellis.

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

Description of the Person of St. Camillus

Having given an account of the virtues and the gifts of our Saint, and of the events of his life, our readers will not be displeased if we give them a short description of his appearance, so that those who feel a devotion to him may have his image better impressed on their minds and more vividly present to their faith.

St. Camillus was exceedingly tall; his height was eight and a half palms (just above six feet), well proportioned in every part. Naturally his hair was between black and auburn, but in his latter years it became somewhat gray. His face was rather long and thin, and his complexion inclined to olive; his forehead expansive; his eyes not very large, and almost black, with such an innate look of pity that they had wonderful influence in

gaining other persons' affections; his eyebrows thick; his mouth rather large, with equal and well-colored lips; his chin wide; his beard scanty, and lighter than his hair; his neck long; his shoulders and breast broad.

He had on his knees two corns as hard as bones, about the size of a walnut, caused by his remaining so long at prayer. At first sight his manner seemed stiff and rough; but yet he was very gentle to deal with, always uniting gravity with a holy cheerfulness. The motions of his body, which are usually an excellent index of the hidden qualities of the mind, were quite composed and modest. And whether he was walking, or speaking, or performing any other action, there was nothing unpleasant or repulsive about him, but simply seeing him was enough to incite persons to devotion; sometimes he limped a little, as if he had to drag on his wounded leg, but without any deformity.

He was of a robust constitution and of great activity, except in his latter years, when he was worn out with fatigue and stooped a little, and looked older than he was. A great servant of God declared that, though F. Camillus was only sixty-five years old, yet he had the weight of one hundred and fifty years of labors and sufferings. After his death his face was so beautiful and its expression so sweet that it seemed smiling; and the people were never satisfied with looking at him and kissing him. And these marks of tender affection were observed even in persons who were naturally most disgusted with dead bodies and who would not for all the world touch a corpse.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

*Brief Account of the Order of the Servants of the Sick
up to the Present Time*

We will now say a few words on the fortunes of his order since his death. At that time it had sixteen houses, all of them in Italy. The zeal and fervor which reigned in these houses may be gathered from the fact, that during the forty years in which our order had existed, two hundred and twenty of the religious had fallen victims to their charity and self-renunciation, at the call of obedience and the service of the sick. Among these we may particularly mention the three original companions of St. Camillus, Bernardino Norcino, Curzio Lodi, and Francesco Profeta, who have been alluded to in the preceding pages. But we must take a rapid glance at the effects of that "spirit of heroic charity which has been diffused and propagated through St. Camillus in his children and disciples," which has been displayed since his death. Among these F. Pier Francesco Pelliccioni deserves the first mention; he was much beloved by St. Camillus, who, just before he died, wrote to him a very tender letter, from which the following is an extract: "My Father, if we never see one another again in this world, I hope we shall see one another in the next life, by the means of the blood of Christ ever blessed: in the meantime on behalf of our Lord I send you millions of benedictions, and I recommend to you our holy order; show towards it the zeal it deserves; and happy you, and all others who shall do so." This letter, written July 5, 1619, served to increase greatly in the heart of this Father the charity which he had already displayed in an heroic degree to-

wards the sick; so that when in 1625 the plague broke out in the Spanish galleys in the port of Genoa, he petitioned to be sent at the head of those religious who had to assist these wretched sailors. Thither he went with such fervor that he had no care for his life; but day and night he made himself an example to his companions, exhorting the sick to penance and to take this scourge as an earnest of salvation, and preparing them for confession and the other sacraments, which he administered himself with the greatest piety. Like our holy founder, he did not neglect their bodies; for some he prepared medicine, for others broth and other food, others he would help to put themselves into as easy positions as the narrowness of their berths permitted. At last he caught the plague and was taken back to Genoa, where he died on the octave of the Assumption, in his forty-sixth year, and, as we must believe, went to receive in heaven the reward of a life entirely consecrated to the salvation of the poor.

F. Biagio de Opertis, who succeeded St. Camillus when he resigned the post of general, although occupied with the care of the whole order, would never omit at the appointed hours to attend on the poor of the hospital where he was staying; his habit was always torn and neglected; the linen that he used was so rough and coarse that it might almost be called hair-cloth. He would never receive the finer clothes which noble and rich ladies were continually offering him, but he asked them to provide for the sacristy, the altar, or the needy poor. His bed was hard and narrow, and he never allowed himself more than three or four hours' rest; his food was generally some miserable fragments left by the sick, and if any one wished him to feed better, he used to answer that he was

not worthy even of that, for he regarded it as the leavings of our Lord's repast, whom he recognized in His poor. He cleansed and bound up most gently the most nauseous wounds; and though he felt his strength declining and his infirmities growing on him, he would never relax from his labors while he could stand on his feet. He died at noon, July 17, 1624, after having borne the greatest pain with heroic patience, completely resigned in his Lord, exhorting all to love and serve God, and embracing the crucifix, in the sixty-fourth year of his age.

To these we might add many of the first companions of the Saint, who were moved by his example and exhortations to expose their lives in the service of the sick, such as those five of whom we gave an account in the second book, who died at Nola of the plague, which they encountered for the sake of assisting the souls and bodies of the afflicted; and all those others who were St. Camillus's indefatigable fellow-laborers in the hospitals and Lazaretti of Nola, Rome, Genoa, Milan, Naples, and other places which were attacked by the plague. We will pass over all these cases, for no one will deny that in those days the order was animated with the true spirit of its founder.

But this spirit has ever been preserved in the order to this day, as appears by the men who have adorned it, of whom we give a few short notices.

F. John Coquerel of Artois was master of many languages. He converted many heretics, especially in Holland, to the true faith. He was provincial of the order in Mantua, where he foretold to the Grand Duke Vincenzo the approach of the plague and many other things: during the contagion he was always joyful and intrepid, and both by his example and his words he animated the others to serve the sick. At last he caught the disease and

died a real martyr of charity in 1630. His life of holiness and penance deserved to end in such a glorious way. It is related of him that he lived in the hospitals, he disciplined himself with heavy chains, he drank only water, and slept on the bare ground.

F. Hilary Cales of Lorraine gave an heroic example of invincible patience under insults and injuries, which he endured with a joyful countenance and imperturbable cheerfulness; he had also the gift of prophecy and of miracles; he died in Genoa in 1636. We read of this servant of God that the crowds of people who came to see him after his death were so great that they were obliged to keep him above ground for nine days; and that on the sixth day his arm was pierced with a lancet, and fluid blood came forth. Many particles of his habits, and things which he had used, were preserved by the people as relics.

Father Giuseppe Romaguerra, of Naples, having a great longing for martyrdom, at last obtained leave to go to India, where he hoped to attain his end; but God had otherwise disposed of his life and required another sacrifice at his hand. While he was assisting a dying man at Madrid, he was mortally wounded by an assassin; he offered his life to God for the pardon of the murderer and expired in peace in the year 1640.

Father Gio. Battista Novato, of Milan, was celebrated for his works on the Most Holy Eucharist and on the Glories of the Virgin Mary; after bearing great pain in a tedious illness, without once giving a sign of impatience or annoyance, he died in peace at Milan in 1648.

Father Gio. Battista Contronibus, of Naples, was so remarkable for his charity in relieving orphans and widows that Pope Paul V made him his almoner, and all acknowledged him to be a true father of the poor. He

was a most zealous upholder of our holy institute, and died in Rome in 1651.

Father Michele Monserrat, of Aragon, was the first to propagate the order in Spain, which he did with such apostolic ardor that Philip IV was moved to confer several grants of money and privileges on the new foundation. After erecting many houses in that vast kingdom, God rewarded his zeal with the death of the just at Madrid in the year 1654.

Brother Pietro Suardi, of Bergamo, was celebrated for his angelic purity, which was attested by God by many miracles; so that once he was unhurt when exposed to the fire of a company of soldiers; another time he carried fire in his hand as if it had been cold water, without being hurt; to give sight to the blind, to predict future events, to know the interior of persons, were for him common, I might almost say natural, actions. He died full of fervor of spirit at Naples in 1656.

Father Benedetto Salgado, of Monfort Delemos, was a man of profound intellect, which gained for him the title of "the philosopher" while professor in the college of Alcala; to this he added a wonderful sanctity. He was always striving to give himself up more and more to the service of the sick in the hospital of Madrid, where at last he caught a contagious fever, of which he died in the flower of his age in 1670.

Father Sebastiano Bianchi, of Garezzo, was a man of most austere life and great charity. By his example and exhortation he moved the princes and grandees of Spain to attend on the sick in the hospitals, where he spent his days and nights, and at last generously sacrificed his life, and died in the college at Madrid in 1672.

Father Andrea Sicli, of Palermo, was a great propagator of our institute; his charity led him to travel in

Mexico, Peru, Brazil, and almost all America, opening hospitals, assisting the sick, serving those who had the plague. He was singularly devoted to the Blessed Virgin, and by invoking her, he converted many to the faith, cured the sick, delivered the possessed, and worked other miracles. He died in Portugal in 1694 and was favored with a vision of the most Holy Virgin calling him to eternal rest.

Father Nicholas du Mortier, of Tournai in Belgium, a man of great learning, celebrated for his skill in Greek and Hebrew. He gave to the Church many writings of great wisdom, and edified all the religious by an example of the rarest virtues, which procured for him the post of general of the order in 1699. He ruled in this capacity for some years, to the great satisfaction of the order, for he had the difficult art of joining sweetness with severity, and zeal with pity and compassion. He died in the kiss of our Lord, in the house of the Maddalena at Rome, in 1730.

Father Pantaleone Dolera, of Genoa, republished with additions the Life of St. Camillus, which had been written by Father Cicatelli a few years after the death of the Saint. He was a perfect imitator of the virtues of our holy founder; he had a great gift of eloquence and persuasiveness, so that when called to the apostolic ministry, he converted innumerable sinners to do penance, to which he invited them more by his example than by his words. He was elected general in 1710, and in three years resigned through his great humility, and retired to Turin, where he died a holy death in 1737.

And, lastly (to omit many others) Father Martino d' Andres Perez, of Castelmimbres, in Castile. After having been professor of the college of Alcala, and having been superior of many of our houses in Spain, he went

to propagate our order in America, in which work he succeeded well. Lima was the scene of his zeal for the salvation of souls, incomparable in humility, most severe to himself, and most scrupulous in his observance of his rule and of his vows, most fervent in prayer; he was, in a word, a true and perfect imitator of St. Camillus. He had, moreover, the gift of prophecy, and of healing, and other great graces. He died at Lima, August 15, 1770, aged seventy-two years.

The virtues and the wonderful works of charity which were performed by the order of St. Camillus caused it to be so respected that, from the time of our holy founder, there have been, and still are, many persons of both sexes, who get one of our Fathers to bless a little cross of cloth, similar to the one we wear, and always carry it on their breast as a memorial of the Passion of the Lord. Some ladies also of the first rank in Rome, wishing to emulate the good which our Fathers did in the hospitals, obtained leave that a congregation of seventy-three members (in memory of the years of our Lady's life) should be erected in the church of the Maddalena, in honor of the Assumption of our Lady; under the direction of one of our Fathers, they occupy themselves in different works of charity, often going to the Hospital of the Incurables to assist the sick women, and to do for them even the lowest and most disgusting services, in imitation of the zeal of St. Camillus, who commenced his foundation in this very hospital. Nor do these ladies restrict themselves to corporal works of mercy; they show the same zeal for the good of souls, and insinuating themselves in a most engaging way into the confidence of these poor women, exhort them to make good confessions, and instruct them in truths necessary to be known by Christians; thus inducing them to amend their lives, to

bear their sickness with patience, to accept of death, and to prepare themselves for it by acts of true and sincere contrition.

Nor was this confined to noble ladies; others also, who wished to follow the footsteps of St. Camillus and of his children, set up a similar congregation, under the patronage of the Most Holy Virgin of Dolors, in another of our churches, St. Maria, in Trivio, called *de' Crociferi*; these also, under the direction of one of our Fathers, frequent the hospitals and practice almost the same works of piety and mercy towards the poor sick women.

Many similar congregations both of men and women were erected in several cities where our Fathers were established; they form lasting testimonies of the spirit which by the grace of God has always reigned and is still vigorous in the order of St. Camillus. Well may we conclude in the words of the immortal Pope Benedict XIV, in his bull of canonization of St. Camillus: "It is wonderful what an amount of good has proceeded from this school of charity for all orders of men; not for the body only, but chiefly for the soul. Hospitals cleansed, the labors of the attendants lightened, the pastors of souls everywhere assisted, their anxieties and cares alleviated, so that it is no wonder that in so short a time so many houses of this institute should have been erected in Italy, Sicily, and remoter provinces, even over all Europe, to the joy of the citizens and with the assistance of the bishops. In these the wonderful spirit of charity which Camillus imparted to and propagated in his children and disciples still flourishes to the great advantage of the people.

"But as the present age has the habit of calumniating all religious orders as bodies useless to society, that have lost their fervor, and are now nothing but collections of idle people, whose only object is their own advantage, it

seems that God, in the scourge which has lately desolated Europe, and more particularly Italy, prepared a wide field for all the orders to signalize themselves; and in particular for the sons of St. Camillus to attest solemnly before God and man that they are still burning with charity, still ready to sacrifice their lives for the spiritual good of their neighbors. Thus they proved, not by vain subtleties of argument, but by evident facts, that the spirit of St. Camillus still lives as heretofore in his children."

We will not speak of the efforts of the order during the prevalence of the cholera in Spain and Portugal (where, before the present changes, it possessed great establishments), but we will restrain ourselves to a brief sketch of what it did in Italy. To begin from the first period when the epidemic showed itself in any of the towns where we have an establishment, from the year 1835, when it began to rage in Genoa, all the members of the order, without any exception, felt themselves so full of fervor and of the spirit of their vocation that they rushed into the thickest of the danger, to shut themselves up in the lazaretti, to visit the private houses, and that with such fervor and zeal that they received from the numerous population the most sincere marks of gratitude and were offered a large sum by the king, which by the rules of the order they were obliged to refuse. They did the same in the two following years when the scourge reappeared, always mindful of their promises and of the heroic offering of their life to God at the time of their solemn profession. The same happened also in other cities of Piedmont, as Tortona, Casale, and others; as also in Naples, Benevento, Palermo, Trapani, Arci-Reale, and Catania, and other cities visited by the fatal epidemic. At the first summons they hesitated not to show themselves true children of the great hero of charity, and to do all

that was possible to relieve the miserable, to encourage the timid by words and by example, so that the public authorities, in gratitude for the benefits received from the sons of St. Camillus, gave them public attestations of their full satisfaction.

We need not here relate what has been done in Rome this very year in which we are writing (1837). How every individual in our three houses, however old and infirm, took his share in the labor, and how this city, once the theatre of the heroic charity of our Father and founder, and the seat of our motherhouse, furnished again illustrious examples of the exact fulfilment of the vows and of the first spirit of our charitable institute, shown forth in the lazaretti and hospitals and in the private houses, as well as in the succor distributed to the indigent, and in their being the first to have the suffrages in their churches for the souls of those who were carried off by the epidemic; all this is sufficiently known to every one; besides, it is not our object to make a panegyric of the order, but to relate the deeds and virtues of its founder.

During the second half of the eighteenth century the order founded by St. Camillus made steady progress in Italy, Spain, and South America. The great French Revolution destroyed and nearly annihilated the congregation, which slowly recovered in the nineteenth century and on many occasions, in time of war or epidemics, the Servants of the Sick emulated the true spirit of Catholic charity of their holy founder.

In the last fifty years the order, although persecuted in Italy and in France, found a new field of activity in a great number of countries in Europe and overseas. There are actually six flourishing provinces of the order in Europe and America. Monasteries of the Servants of the Sick are to be found in Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark,

France, Germany, Holland, Ireland, Peru, Poland, Spain, Tirol (Adige), Italy.

The first foundation in the United States is located in Milwaukee, Wis., where the humble beginnings of a monastery and hospital for men have already started.

We protest before God and men that we have not written these things for vainglory, or for an earthly end, but only for the glory of God, to demonstrate against those who foolishly try to lower and crush (if they can) the regular orders that have so well deserved of the Church and of mankind, to demonstrate that in all of them in general, and in the sons of St. Camillus in particular, their first fervor and the spirit of charity of their founders have been preserved for two centuries and a half.

May God bless this our intention, and may the example of St. Camillus and his children excite many souls to imitate them; so that with the increase of the children of such a Father, charity towards our afflicted and needy brethren, towards the sick, the pestilence-stricken, and the dying, may likewise increase; so that all the faithful in their sickness and death may participate in those spiritual aids which this holy institute offers to them, and which were the chief scope and desire of our Father in founding his society.

May the Father of mercies and God of all consolation, who has deigned to enrich St. Camillus with a most sublime gift of heroic charity, for the comfort and assistance of souls in their last mortal conflict — may He deign by his merits to pour into all of us the spirit of His holy love, that at the hour of our death we may overcome the common enemy and finally obtain a heavenly crown in Paradise.